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The Franklin Mystery;

Or, The Recovery of the Jewels

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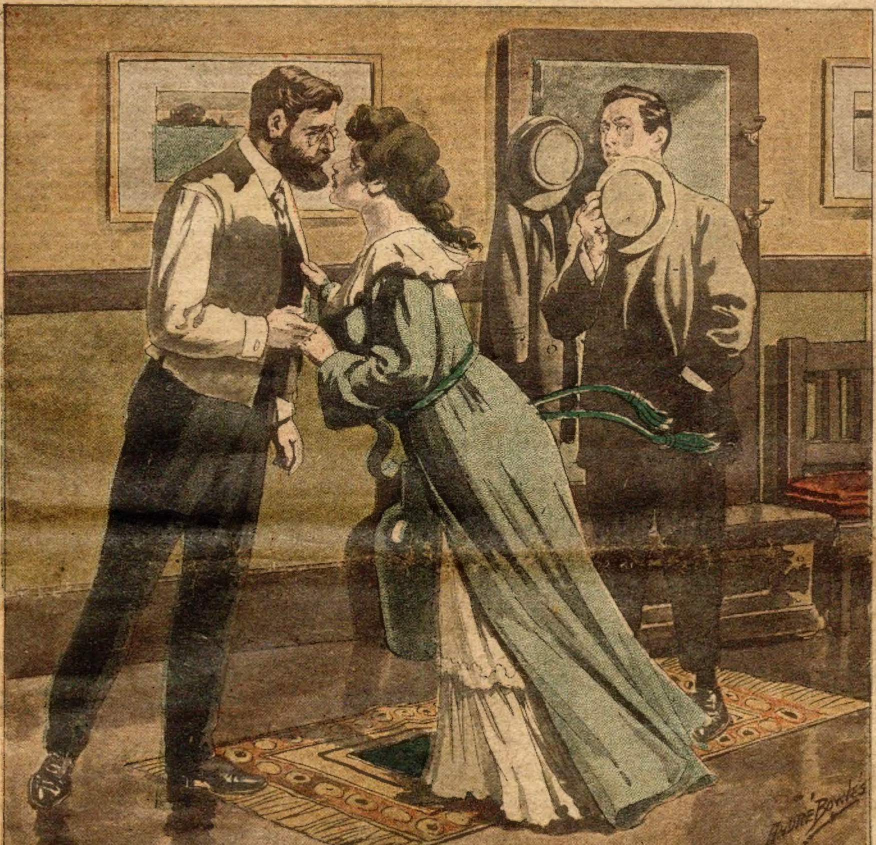

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CHAPTER I.

UNJUSTLY SUSPECTED.

"HELP, help!"

"What's the matter?"

"Murder!"

"Who?"

"Mrs. Franklin, the doctor's wife."

This cry for assistance was uttered by a woman leaning out of the second-story window of a house in the suburbs of Brooklyn, and broke the stillness of the early morning air with startling distinctness, the cry for help.

Passing through the street at the time was a young man, who naturally stopped short and looked up at the wildly excited woman. The next moment he ran up the steps and tried the door-knob. It failed to yield, and he put his shoulder to the panel. The lock gave way, and he bounded upstairs.

The woman was still screaming hysterically. The sound of her voice guided him to the farthest end of the house. He met no one in the halls, and he was beginning to suppose the woman who raised the alarm was the only living person about, when out from one of the rooms stumbled a man, disheveled and coatless.

"Who are you?" questioned the man of the stranger who had responded to the cry for help.

"My name is Jones; I'm from the central office. I've come to see what's wrong."

"My wife has been murdered," moaned the man, going back into the room. "Oh, what shall I do? It is too late to save her!" He sank into the nearest chair, and turned to Jones a face haggard and pale. The man was Dr. Franklin.

Detective Jones glanced round the room with a professional look, his eyes taking in everything. All the gas jets were on full, affording a chance for him to see every object distinctly. It was quite a large apartment, and its furnishings indicated that the occupant was a woman of refinement. On the bed in one corner of the room was the body of Mrs. Franklin. In another part of the room was a work table, and a crumpled towel lay on one end. The bed was conspicuous by its contrast with the rest of the furniture, which was of the prevailing "mission" style. The bed had been fashionable two or three generations ago, a large four poster affair with legs raised high enough to permit a truckle bed sliding underneath. The four posts projected considerably above the head and footboards, and were surmounted with hand-carved wooden balls. Evidently the bed, which seemed out of place in this abode of modern elegant fittings, was an heirloom, and owed its place of honor to some sentimental recollection of its owner.

The detective approached the side of the bed and looked at the face of the dead woman.

"When did you discover that your wife had been murdered, doctor?" asked the detective.

"Half an hour ago," declared the physician without raising his head. "She was beyond the power of earthly assistance long before I found out that this terrible thing had happened."

Jones bent over the form of the doctor's wife, and began to examine everything about the bed. He noticed that Mrs. Franklin's hands had been tied to the two upper posts with pieces of stout cord.

The detective made a tour of the room. On the table was a towel. He picked it up and held the cloth to his nose.

"Huh, chloroform," he exclaimed. "Was this here when you came in, doctor?"

"No; it was over my wife's face," replied Dr. Franklin, glancing up in surprise at the question.

"What is it doing here on the table?" asked the detective.

The physician looked inquiringly at the central office man.

"Why, I threw it there the moment I came in and saw what had happened."

"But you know that nothing should be moved from a body until the coroner has given his permission," replied Jones, tensely.

Dr. Franklin glanced quickly at the other man.

"I don't understand you," he said. "When I came into the room I did the first thing anybody would do—try to save her before it was too late. It seem strange if I wouldn't, particularly in the case of my own wife."

The detective made no answer, but directed another keen glance at the man sitting in the chair.

"You say that she died from the effects of the drug, doctor?"

"Yes," answered the physician.

"But are you sure about it?"

The question was too irritating for him to allow it to be passed over without showing how it annoyed him.

"If you don't believe what I say diagnose the case yourself," snapped the doctor, who felt that he had incurred in some way the hostility of the detective.

"Have you made a thorough examination?" asked Jones, ignoring the sarcasm.

"Of course," cried the doctor with considerable heat. "What do you mean?"

"That you ought to make another."

"Eh, what's that?" exclaimed the physician, jumping to his feet.

"Look at your wife's throat," said Jones, eyeing Dr. Franklin narrowly. The doctor went close to the bed and bent over his wife's body.

"See that?" questioned the detective, pointing to two indistinct spots, dark in color. He spoke in a peculiar tone.

The doctor looked. He turned deathly pale, and his hands trembled slightly. The change in his appearance did not escape the central office man.

"Tell me what that is?"

"Finger marks," answered the doctor.

"Exactly. And do you mean to say these were not apparent when you made the first examination?"

"No," answered the physician, visibly affected.

"Very strange these black and blue spots were not noticed until I discovered them," declared Jones pointedly. The detective's tone, however, was lost on his listener. Dr. Franklin was so overcome with grief that he was hardly in condition to answer questions, and the shock of seeing what had befallen his wife had now completely unnerved him. But the detective, who was a new, inexperienced individual, obsessed with the idea of his abilities as a thief-catcher, thought the doctor's failure to observe the finger marks at his first examination a tangible clew for him to work on. As a matter of fact, the marks were so faint that a person in an excited state of mind would not be likely to notice them, trained observer though he might be.

Jones then picked up the towel and scrutinized it again. It was smudged with dark stains.

"Did you notice what's on the towel?"

The doctor did not answer, and the detective came close, the towel in his hand.

Here are black finger marks, and they are the same size as those on your wife's throat.

Dr. Franklin straigthened up and looked at the detective. At the same time he unconsciously glanced at his hands. The thumb and forefinger of his right hand were smudged with lamp black. Jones noticed the movement, and saw the smudge when the physician made the discovery. Before anything could be said a woman's voice was heard in the hall. It was the doctor's niece, the woman who had called out the window a short while before. Shortly after Jones' sudden entrance into the house she went back to her room. She had just managed to reach her door, but the moment the young girl—for she was still in her teens—crossed the threshold she sank at the foot of the bed in a faint. It did not last long, however, for now she had come to, and was raising her voice just outside the door of Mrs. Franklin's room.

The physician rushed into the hall, dazed though he was, and tried to pacify the young woman. But her hysteria for a few seconds was uncontrollable. She ran to the doctor and threw her arms round his neck.

"Save auntie," she cried. "Oh, uncle, why did you let them do it? If you hadn't quarreled perhaps this wouldn't have happened."

The detective's eye lighted up triumphantly at these last words. "A quarrel," he thought. Then here was the motive for the murder. If the physician did not actually commit the deed he had had an accomplice. He would not waste time asking more questions, but would ring up the nearest police station, and after turning the case over to the officers, hunt for the person involved in the murder with the physician.

The doctor gently released himself from the embrace of his niece, and carried her into her room. Pulling a bottle from his pocket he held it to the girl's nose, and in a few momentes she was asleep.

"She will rest quietly now," he declared, dropping into a chair to watch and make sure she was unconscious. He started a moment later for his wife's room, but suddenly halted as the telephone bell tinkled in his office on the floor below.

The doctor stopped and listened. He heard the voice of Detective Jones.

"Is this the hundredth precinct?" asked Jones in a low tone. The answer was in the affirmative, for the central office man went on.

"Send round a patrol at once, and notify the coroner. A murder has been committed at No.—— Nth street—Dr. Franklin.—Yes, what's that? Oh, yes, I've got my eye on the people mixed up in it. I think he knows more about the crime than he is willing to admit. I'll give you the details as soon as the sergeant gets on the spot."

A click of the instrument, and the receiver was hung up.

CHAPTER II.

THE BUMPTIOUS DETECTIVE.

Dr. Franklin stood glued to the spot. Then the bungling detective suspected him of murdering his own wife with whom he had lived amicably, with the exception of an occasional tiff from which no well regulated family is exempt, for nearly twenty years.

The detective had no idea that his conversation had been overheard, as he spoke in low tones, and depended upon the doctor's attention being taken up with calming the young woman on the floor above. Would they put him under arrest when the police arrived? No, it sounded as though the detective intended to wait until he had gathered more evidence before submitting the doctor to such an indignity.

What should he do? The only thing was to wait developments, and act accordingly. Therefore Dr. Franklin stepped back into his niece's room. Presently the detective came to the door, his feet treading the carpet in the hall so lightly that no sound betrayed his progress from the room on the floor below.

Everything was quiet and the detective entered the room.

"She's resting well, doctor?"

"Yes, I just gave her a sleeping potion. The horror of this night has been too much for the poor girl's nerves."

The detective did not ask any more questions of the physician, but roamed from room to room hoping to find something definite in the way of clews. But all the time he kept watch on the doctor in case the physician tried to leave the house.

Not long after the police were 'phoned the rumbling of wheels was heard down the street, and the patrol drove up to the door. A sergeant and two officers sprang from the seat and entered the house. Jones, who had rushed below to hail the police the moment they appeared round the corner, led the way to the room where the body lay.

The detective briefly outlined what he had seen, taking care not to say anything before the physician that might arouse the doctor's suspicions. But at the first opportunity he drew the sergeant aside and made known his real suppositions.

"Are you going to place the doctor under arrest now?" asked the police sergeant.

"All the evidence points against him," responded Jones. "I've found a motive for the crime. His niece spoke to him of some quarrel having taken place between the man and his wife."

The sergeant looked intently at the detective, and if his thoughts could have been revealed to Jones that individual would have been surprised to learn what the sergeant thought of some of the central office men, particularly of Jones.

"Well," said the sergeant slowly, "better not go too fast. Your evidence ain't complete yet. You don't want to humiliate a man of the doctor's reputation by having it known publicly that he is accused of murder. Of course, it wouldn't do to let a man out of our sight who might know something more about the case than we have found out so far."

"I feel pretty sure," responded the central office man. "But to satisfy you I will look around a bit before putting the nippers on him. It generally turns out that the most respectable persons about the place are the ones who do the job."

"That may be in some cases," rejoined the sergeant, "but take my tip and go easy."

Presently the coroner came and interrupted any further discussion of the case between the two men. Detective Jones under pretense of taking him at once to the room of Mrs. Franklin got the coroner alone in the hall long enough to make a brief statement of what he had found out, and plainly spoke of his suspecting the physician.

The coroner and the police made a thorough examination of the house from cellar to garret. Dr. Franklin accompanying them on their rounds.

It did not take long for the coroner to see enough for the coroner's jury to bring in an instant verdict of "death at the hands of persons unknown."

The coroner's examination was soon over and he went away with the police, leaving one man on guard, who was instructed to keep an eye on the doctor, and not let him get out of sight.

By this time Jones thought he would continue his sleuth work by going to the neighbors and asking questions concerning the happenings of the last few hours previous to the murder.

The first place he went to was the house next door, which was occupied by a family named Tupper. Jones knocked and a large stout woman answered.

"Mrs. Tupper?" he inquired politely.

"Yes, what is it?"

Jones showed his shield with all the bumptiousness of an amateur who has just bought a ten-cent badge from a mail order detective agency.

"I'm from the central office," he said. "I wish to ask a few questions about your neighbors, Dr. Franklin and his wife. Of course, you know what has happened over there?" He pointed his finger in the direction of the physician's house. The woman nodded, and the detective went on, as her manner indicated a willingness to talk. He wasted no time beating about the bush, but plunged right into his subject.

"Did you hear any strange noises during the night before the cry of 'murder' uttered by Dr. Franklin's niece?"

"No; everything was quiet as usual," she replied. "We were not disturbed until the cry for help woke everybody."

"You were not up then, and did not see whether anybody ran away?" continued Jones. The reply being in the negative, he touched on the relations between the doctor and his wife.

"You know the family pretty well, do you not?"

"Yes, I frequently visited Mrs. Franklin."

"Did you see much of the doctor?"

"When he was not visiting his patients, he put in his time in a laboratory where, I understand, he carried on numerous experiments. He is a very reserved man, and does not associate with people except in a professional way."

"Do you know whether they ever quarreled?"

"Sometimes, I believe."

"Do you know what they quarreled about?"

"No; she never confided in me the nature of their quarrels."

"Have you seen any suspicious characters in the neighborhood latey?"

"Yes," answered the woman. "Only a little while ago I saw a tramp act queerly round the house."

"When was this?"

"Before the police came in the patrol."

Jones did not ask any more questions. He thanked the woman and went back to Dr. Franklin's. Then the detective made a circle of the house and discovered footprints leading from beneath the windowsill of Mrs. Franklin's room to the barn. He was bending close to the ground making an examination when a person spoke to him.

"The fellow making those marks must have worn big shoes."

Jones straightened up and looked at the man at his side. He was dressed in a seedy coat and trousers frayed at the ends. It seemed very much as if he belonged to the genus tramp.

"Must have been a coon," continued the stranger.

Jones looked sharply at the man before him, and he felt that he was not in the neighborhood for any good purpose. As a matter of fact, the appearance of the man would excite the prejudice of people who like Jones, were inclined to judge a person by his clothes.

"What are you doing round here?" asked Jones threateningly.

"Oh, I just dropped round. Why?"

Jones looked at the man from head to foot. An answer was on the tip of his tongue when his attention was arrested by the size of the man's shoes. The detective placed his hand upon the other's shoulder.

"Put your shoe on the right footprint, and let me see how it fits," ordered Jones imperiously, drawing a revolver.

CHAPTER III.

A STRANGE TRAMP.

"Why, what's that for, boss?" asked the tramp in amazement, and pretending to cower at the sight of the firearm.

"Because I want you to."

"But suppose I do not want to?"

"You will, and be quick about it," snarled Jones, thrusting the stranger forward and compelling him to cover the footprint with his shoe.

It fitted exactly, and it looked to Jones as if he had caught Dr. Franklin's accomplice.

The detective whirled the man around looking him squarely in the face. His fierce glance made the tramp quail.

"What have you got against me?" the man asked

"Everything. You have helped to murder the doctor's wife."

"Murder the doctor's wife?" repeated the tramp in feigned astonishment. Then a sudden fear seemed to grip his heart. Perhaps this peculiar coincidence of the footprints measuring his shoe might hang him. Better get away than stay and explain when everything seemed against him. Lacking money and influence he would not stand a ghost of a chance if brought to trial with such damning evidence remaining uncontroverted. But how to get out of the clutches of this man who acted with all the authority of an officer of the law.

"Look! What's that?" the tramp cried suddenly, pointing over the detective's shoulder. It was a time-honored trick, but for all practical purposes of the present situation it was new to the central office man. He turned instead of tightening his grip on the prisoner. That was the one moment the tramp hoped for, and with a bound he sprang for liberty. Nearby was a fence close to the doctor's barn. As the man darted away the detective drew his revolver and tried to stop his flight. But the tramp ran on and the next moment disappeared behind the corner of Dr. Franklin's barn.

Jones was anxious to capture the fugitive, for on account of something in the man's manner that made the detective feel he was not what he appeared to be, the central office man decided that he was about to lay hands upon an accomplice in the murder.

The man who appeared to be a tramp wanted to avoid Jones, but not for the same reason the detective imagined. Had the stranger spoken a word to the man from the central office Jones' manner would have entirely changed. But as he did not suspect the identity of the person who had just disappeared behind the barn, Jones, revolver in hand, continued the chase.

"This looks like a stern chase," reflected the detective. "I guess he intends to play tag around the corners." Jones suddenly checked his flight, and walked cautiously to the next corner, for he supposed the fellow was probably armed. In that case he would probably resort to desperate measures if caught in a tight place.

Nearing the side of the structure he peeped round, expecting every second to feel a bullet whiz past his ear. But nobody was in sight. The detective then hurried on to the next corner of the barn. Still there was no sign of the fleeing man. On the other hand Jones knew that no one could get away from that vicinity, once he had come so close to the structure, which stood apart in an open stretch from other buildings. It seemed hardly possible for anybody to cross such a wide area without being seen by one who made the circuit of the barn so rapidly.

Jones then tried the barn door, but it was locked. Evidently the tramp had not gone inside the building. But then where could he have disappeared to.

Jones made another quick circuit of the barn, and as he came round the last corner a stranger, who seemed to come from out of the clouds, accosted him leisurely. The man looked like a mechanic, and was an inch or two taller than the tramp. Jones stared at him.

"Where did you come from?" he asked in surprise.

"Over yonder," the man replied unconcernedly, pointing to the nearest pathway leading from the rear of Dr. Franklin's property to a small plantation of pine trees. "Why, ain't got any objections, I hope?"

"No—er, only I wonder if you met a tramp going in that direction from these grounds?" asked Jones.

The supposed mechanic's mind worked quickly, and his answer was in keeping with Jones' wish to be put on the trail of the tramp.

"Yes, I saw a man dressed in ragged clothes, as I passed through the wood," answered the stranger. "Were you looking for anybody particularly?"

"I am," replied the central office man, who did not suppose that a tramp who had been seen in the neighborhood so recently could be anybody but the man he wanted. He straightway darted across the fence and down the path indicated by the stranger, without making any explanation of his quick movements.

The stranger watched the retreating figure of the detective, and permitted a faint smile to appear at the corner of his lips. Then, when Jones had disappeared entirely, he walked slowly to the house. Though the man moved with apparent unconcern his eyes were quietly taking in everything, and not a sound was lost upon a pair of sharp ears.

On he walked, and a few more steps took him to the front of the doctor's house. The policeman left on guard confronted him at the door.

"What do you want?" inquired the bluecoat.

The man, who by this time had placed his left hand over the back of the right, and looked as if he were suffering considerable pain, said that his hand was in bad shape and that he needed the services of a physician.

The policeman's sympathies were instantly touched.

"Are yez hurted bad?" he asked.

"Yes; my hand's cut. Is the doctor in?"

"Sure, and I'll call him to see yer," responded the policeman, who immediately stepped to the stairs and told the doctor that a patient was waiting below.

The next moment Dr. Franklin came from the floor above and led the way to his consulting room. The door closed behind them, the man's manner instantly changed.

CHAPTER IV.

SPARKS TAKES THE CASE.

He no longer appeared to be the easy-going person who had talked with Jones only a short time before. Now he acted entirely different. And the doctor seemed to be expecting him, as he showed no surprise at the call. The man straightened up and took off a false mustache.

"Well, doctor, I got here at last," he declared. "It looked at one time, though, as if I would be taken off to the station house as an accomplice of yours."

"Why, how did that happen?" asked Dr. Franklin.

"All through that fool Jones," answered the stranger. "He came near holding me up outside. As it was, he did draw a gun on me, and chased me round your barn. If there hadn't been that large dog kennel on the other side of the building he might have got me after all. I just had time to crawl in, and while he was speculating on whether I had cut across lots, I changed my disguise. After he made the circuit again, I came out, a different man to all appearances."

"Extraordinary blunderer that central office man," cried the doctor, impatiently. "But it is safe to leave a difficult situation for you to handle, Tom Sparks."

As the doctor mentioned the name of the man he turned an admiring glance at the newcomer, for it was no less a personage than the renowned detective of that name, a name that struck terror to all evil-doers. This was because Sparks had the reputation of never missing his man, no matter how long it took to find him. The chase might be one of unusual duration—though not often—but in the end Sparks always got a criminal, once he took up the trail.

His reputation was known to the doctor. This was not strange, for in addition to the knowledge about the detective's exploits which had been common property for a number of years, the physician was well acquainted with the sleuth. As a matter of fact, the two men had been playmates in years gone by. And the friendship of those early days had been maintained throughout the years of youth and manhood. Whenever Detective Sparks' duties took him in the neighborhood he always stopped in to see Dr. Franklin.

But this time he had come at the request of Dr. Franklin himself, and the call had been a hurry one over the 'phone.

"You got here sooner than I thought you would, Tom," said the doctor. "And I feel relieved now that you are here. I barely 'phoned for you without letting the people on watch know what I was doing."

"Sure thing; I hurried off the moment you called up. Leave it to me to respond quickly to the call for help from an old pal in a crisis like this," answered the detective heartily. "Fortunate that I was in the office at the time you 'phoned."

"Yes; and yet I am momentarily expecting to be arrested as it is," declared the physician. "Isn't horrible to think that to add to the terrible calamity that has just befallen me, I am under suspicioa of having murdered Mary."

The doctor, overcome with emotion, sank into the nearest chair. Sparks drew close to the side of his friend.

"Cheer up, old man," he said. "I know it is an awful blow, but I will see you through and clear you of this dreadful charge in less than a week. And besides, I will have the real murderer safe behind the bars in that time."

The detective grasped the hand of his friend hanging limply at his side, and shook it with a reassuring warmth.

"Try and brace up a moment, doctor, as I want to ask some questions," said Detective Sparks.

Dr. Franklin sat up and looked at his friend, and Sparks went on.

"I want to get at the gist of the matter. Tell me first whom you suspect?"

Dr. Franklin's expression indicated the nature of his answer.

"Why, I haven't the least idea, Tom," he replied. "I don't know of an enemy in the world that either my wife or I have."

"Did the police discover whether the house was robbed?"

"Not that I know of; and I did not look, I have been so overcome with grief. I can think of nothing but the terrible loss of Mary."

"Well, did Jones say anything to you besides the insinuation against yourself which you told me about over the telepone?"

"No, he did not," replied the physician."

"Then I'll leave you for a few moments," said the detective, "and take a look round the premises."

Leaving the physician sitting in the chair in the consulting room Tom Sparks opened the door and turned up the stairs. Tom stopped long enough to open his coat and expose a shield readily recognized by the officer. At the same time the detective came close and whispered in his ear. The policeman drew back in surprise. But this was only for a second. Then he straightened up, saluted deferentially, and said: "Excuse me, Mr. Sparks, for speaking as I did. But it's a compliment to yer disguise not to recognize yer at first."

Every member of the force knew of course the reputation of the great detective, and not one of the men but wished for the day to come when he himself might be promoted to the ranks of the plain clothes men, with the possible chance of working on a detail under the direction of Sparks who was not connected with the central office in the same manner as Jones, he being under orders of the chief of detectives. Sparks had no superior but the police commissioner, and reported to him only when he saw fit to do so. He was such a big man that on more than one occasion when an imperious commissioner thought to give him orders in a lordly way he went directly to the mayor and tendered his resignation. But that official realized what a loss it would mean to the city if Tom Sparks were not conciliated and gave strict orders to the commissioner never under any circumstances to interfere with Sparks. It was an open secret about police headquarters that if it came to another clash between the detective and the commissioner the mayor felt that it was easier to find another commissioner than to replace Tom Sparks. Consequently the breech was patched up and Tom consented to withdraw his resignation.

Sparks smiled pleasantly at the remark of the policeman, and then asked the way to the room where lay the body of Mrs. Franklin, whom Sparks had known almost as well as her husband. Though his nerves were like steel and long ago he had ceased to be affected at distressing sights, he gave way to a momentary tremor on crossing the threshold of the room, and gazed at the lifeless form of the woman who had the day before been chatting gaily with all the animation and buoyancy of a happy and contented wife.

But the next moment Sparks was again the detective whose single aim was to find clews which would lead to the detection of the murderer. He advanced to the bedside and took particular note of the position of the body. Then he examined the room with great care.

He noticed the finger marks on the towel and how they corresponded with those on the throat of the dead woman. Neither did the fact escape him that the marks showed a large hand.

The detective walked to the window, and glancing out, saw faint marks of the same size on the sill. The man who murdered Mrs. Franklin made his escape through the window, dropping into the garden below. Sparks descended to the first floor and examined the ground underneath the room of the doctor's wife. But contrary to his expectations, there were no footprints. But while they were not directly beneath the window Sparks discovered marks of the man's shoes just over the fence dividing the garden patch from the lawn. He had jumped from the window to clear the fence instead of clambering over the sill and dropping at once. The fence was a rather high one, and the man took chances of arousing some one by making a noise in clearing the distance instead of letting go the sill to drop softly in the fresh earth below.

Although Tom Sparks found marks of the man's shoes on the other side of the pickets he discovered them only by close observation. The man had barely cleared the fence, landing in a thick clump of grass. No small man could have cleared the distance, and Tom thought that the murderer must have been tall, athletic and very agile.

But no sooner had he noticed how the man had left the house than the clew was lost, for the lawn was too closely tufted to yield to the pressure of a man's shoes.

CHAPTER V.

THE TALL NEGRO.

While Tom circled the house and grounds trying to pick up the thread so abruptly broken, the police allowed the removal of the body to an undertaking establishment in Brooklyn, to be prepared for burial.

Dr. Franklin did not attempt to leave the house, for he was not quite sure whether this would be permitted. He thought it best to wait for the return of Sparks and ask his advice. He noticed that no one acted as if he were under orders to watch his movements, yet the physician felt himself under a kind of surveillance. None of the policemen near the house showed an interest in his actions, but on looking out of the window of the consulting room suddenly he espied a man peering at him over the fence. The face disappeared the moment the doctor looked through the glass.

"It seems as if the authorities are not going to let me get away until they are sure I am not guilty," he thought, as he turned from the window and took a seat at his desk.

In the course of half an hour Tom Sparks came in; the doctor rose quickly, and eagerly questioned him.

"Have you found anything that looks like a clew, Tom?" he asked.

"Yes, I have," answered the detective softly, after closing the door and making sure that no one was outside listening. "But first tell me, who has been working for you since I saw you three months ago. Wasn't there a tall negro in your employ up to within a week?"

"Yes, but who told you, Tom?" asked the physician. "His name was Frank."

"Nobody; I found a suit of clothes in the furnace room, and there was a razor stuck in the waistcoat pocket, without a case. Only negroes carry razors around in their pockets that way, you know. Then again the pattern of the cloth was too loud for any one else to wear."

Dr. Franklin cast an admiring glance at his companion, but said nothing. Tom Sparks went on.

"He slept in a small room partitioned off from the coal bin," said the detective, "and not only that but he had orders not to leave the house after eight o'clock, did he not?"

The physician looked at Sparks in surprise.

"How did you know that, Tom, I never said anything about that to you."

"You didn't have to," returned the other man with a smile. "I discovered your rule by the way he broke it."

"Yes, how's that?"

"Near his room is a small window looking out into the garden, which was secured with a padlock. The lock, while appearing to be in working order, had been broken and then put together in a way to make it seem all right. But a touch instantly opened it without the aid of a key."

The detective paused for a moment. Then he continued.

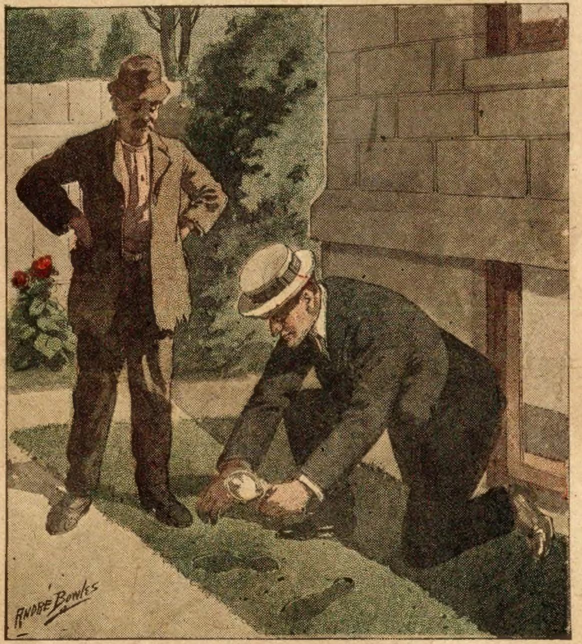
"Weren't there a number of robberies in the neighborhood during the last three months?"

"Yes, nearly a dozen; but how did you find out now unless you asked some of the neighbors?" questioned Dr. Franklin.

"Oh, I didn't have to make any inquiries," said Sparks. "And besides, I have learned that your cellar was turned into a sort of cache to keep the stolen goods until disposed of."

"You don't say?" gasped the physician.

"Yes, but you would have known it before this if you had gone into the cellar. You would have discovered this," said Sparks, holding up a nickel-plated letter-opener, a stamp box and a few inexpensive trinkets. "These were hidden under a heap of old burlap bags in one corner of the man's room. They belong to Mrs. Williams who lives across the way, don't they?"



"The fellow must have worn big shoes."

"Yes, yes, but how——"

"That's easy to answer, but first tell me, wasn't your man-of-all-work religious?"

"Yes, he was always singing hymns and quoting from the Bible. How——"

"Oh, I'm not gifted with second sight," laughed Sparks. "I only found a testament with his name written on the front page, and between the leaves was a newspaper account, in which it speaks of Mrs. Williams' lost articles."

"Did you discover anything else?" inquired the physician.

"Yes; marks on the window-sill close to his room in the cellar."

"What did they indicate?"

"That this canting coon who was always talking religion—he was, wasn't he?"

"Yes, now that you speak of it."

"This ebony, church-seat warmer, was not always saying his prayers as you supposed," declared Tom Sparks. "When you thought him asleep he was out robbing the neighbors. Oh, he was a nice one, singing psalms on Sundays, and not letting an opportunity go by to keep you informed of how he was supposed to spend his time on the Sabbath."

"The hypocrite!" exclaimed the doctor with righteous indignation.

"Yes, he was a hypocrite, singing the loudest in the colored church on Sunday and robbing everybody's house in the neighborhood after dark."

"The cur, to deceive me like that!" cried the physician, hotly. "And while the rest of the house was fast asleep that fellow was terrorizing the people around here in such fashion. Strange I did not get an inkling of his habits."

"You would, had you had occasion to examine the woodwork of the cellar window. All the paint is worn off the sill from his bootheels," said the detective. He paused a moment, pulled a bright object from his pocket, and said: "Look at this."

Dr. Franklin's eyes took in the article at a glance, and his frame trembled.

"Where did you find that?" he exclaimed breathlessly. "That's some of my wife's jewelry."

"Yes, I know; it was on the cellar floor," answered Tom Sparks. "The negro dropped it in his hasty flight. Not only that, but other trinkets fell out of his pocket in the yard." The detective held up for the doctor's inspection a diamond earring of old-fashioned design. "The other one is going to be the means of my getting on track of our black friend," said Sparks determinedly.

"Oh, I hope it will be soon, Tom!" cried the physician in trembling accents. "He has murdered the best woman that ever lived, and he must be brought to justice."

"That he will, and in short order," and the set look that appeared on the face of the man-hunter would have made the negro's heart sink if he had seen it. "Hanging is too good for the scoundrel. Furthermore, I will be sustained in my efforts to catch him by a strong personal feeling." Sparks grasped the hand of the bereaved man. "Because of our friendship, I will move Heaven and earth to put him behind the bars, and see that he gets all that's coming to him without delay."

The doctor arose, and Sparks took his hat.

"You stay in the house, and do not attempt to go away until I come back; the police have you under surveillance, as you doubtless suspect. They won't do anything while you remain close by, not wanting to humiliate you by making an arrest until they get clinching evidence against you, or find the real murderer," cautioned Sparks.

"It's bad enough to lose the best and dearest woman that ever was," groaned the doctor, "without being accused of making way with her, and in such a terrible manner."

"I know," said Sparks, putting his hand on the other's shoulder reassuringly. "But believe me, I will run down the murderer in thirty-six hours."

Sparks had moved toward the door, and now opening it he went out, after first grasping the doctor's hand.

"God speed you, Tom," cried Dr. Franklin fervently.

And the detective walked out, grimly determined to do what he had promised, and within the time he had allotted himself to put hands on the person who had brought so much grief in a once happy household.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE TRACK.

As Tom had already made all necessary examination of the premises and grounds to obtain traces of the negro's movements he left the neighborhood to follow his clews elsewhere. In turning the corner of the street on which the doctor's house stood he glanced back and saw Jones, the central office man, nosing around like a burlesque detective. The officious young man was walking tiptoe over the lawn as if he were stepping on eggs. When a suspicious-looking mark attracted his attention he bent over and examined broken blades of grass with a pocket magnifying glass.

"Huh," grunted Tom, "that fellow acts as if he is trailing a tribe of Indians on the warpath. Never mind, he means well, and with proper training might develop into a useful man for the department's scrub work."

Sparks boarded the next trolley and rode to the nearest "L" station. The moment he got seated he pulled from his pocket a pad and pencil. For ten or fifteen minutes he scribbled away, throwing several sheets out of the window, however, as if what he had written did not suit him. But by the time the train reached the Manhatten side of the East River Tom's pocket contained several slips carefully worded for use in the first move of his plan for capturing Mrs. Franklin's murderer.

"That will start the ball rolling," thought Tom, as he left the car and walked to the writing room of a small commercial travelers' hotel a few blocks away, over on the West Side.

Here he addressed several envelopes, inclosed the slips of paper, one to each envelope, and then dropped the whole lot in the nearest mail box.

Then Sparks went back to the hotel lobby, and lighting a cigar, sat down in a chair near the door to meditate on the situation. A recapitulation of the events of the last few hours and his deductions resulted in a feeling that the doctor's man-of-all-work, Frank, was the guilty person. That is to say, Sparks felt sure of his having stolen the jewelry, but the detective had his doubts as to the negro's having deliberately planned to commit murder. But allowing that supposition, could there have been an accomplice who was responsible for Mrs. Frankin's death? This theory was not supported by any evidence.

"When," thought Sparks, "and by whom was the woman killed?" It looked, after all, as though the negro was responsible for both the robbery and the execution of the more horrible crime. It seemed nonsense to allow a feeling similar to a woman's intuition to interfere with the cold logic of facts. There was evidence in the work of both crimes having been committed by one and the same person. But whether this were so he was to find out later.

"I should have gone over the premises more carefully than I did," reflected Tom. "And yet my vision has not become suddenly dull. My faculties are as sharp as they ever were, and I am sure nothing escaped my eyesight."

Still the detective was not satisfied. As he had a wonderful power of visualizing schemes of the past, recalling before his mind's eye every physical detail from the general surroundings of a house to the design of carpets, discolorations on the walls, and even little specks of foreign substances along the waistboards of rooms—in short all that minutiae which escapes the average person—Tom Sparks as he sat in the hotel lobby, miles away from the place where the events had occurred, scrutinized every inch of the house inside and out, as well as the grounds, as easily as if he were on the spot.

For ten minutes he sat in deep abstraction, like one in a trance. Though so immobile physically his mind was working with incredible rapidity. As his thoughts swept the vivid scene, not a detail escaped him.

Suddenly he sat bolt upright in his chair, to the surprise and discomfort of the nearby loungers who were dozing and lolling in their seats. They turned angry glances at him for being disturbed, but as quickly relapsed into a calm repose when, the next moment, the inconsiderate intruder on their peace, made a hasty departure through the door.

At the next block Sparks jumped on a car and shortly arrived at the Brooklyn Bridge. Thence by the "L" he rode back to the house of Dr. Franklin. He rang the bell and the door opened, the doctor himself answering the quick signal of the push button.

This extremely interesting story will be continued in next week's Ledger, presenting the readers with some very strange happenings. If you are not a subscriber to the Ledger, you are strongly urged to send in your subscription at once. Every family should take the Ledger, as humor and stories and pictures make life brighter and pleasanter for all, bringing health and entertainment and doing every one good. Be wise and attend to this today.

* * *

Needed Room.

Mrs. Grumps (looking over new house—What in the world is that vast attic for?

Mr. Grumps—It's to hold the things that you buy and can't use.

DAZZLING SCHEMES;

Or, Love and Revolutions

By WILL LISENBEE

[Copyright 1911 by W. D. Boyce Co.]

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CHAPTER IV.

IN THE NET.

"I WAS afraid," said Bobby Henning, looking at Sandy through a wisp of cigar smoke, "that you would think I was treating you shabbily by being absent when you came. But you seem to have been entertaining yourself, or furnishing diversion for some one else. Tell me about it."

Sandy McDonald smiled.

"There isn't a whole lot to tell," he said. "It will keep. First tell me about your visit to the President. Did you run your advertisement on him as live reading matter?"

"Better than that," laughed Bobby. "It went as an important state document. He is going to give our enterprise his personal indorsement, and he promised me before I left that the foods manufactured by our establishment would be furnished to the army and navy of Guadalayara. What do you think of that?"

"I was just thinking," replied Sandy thoughtfully, "that it is a pity you didn't have a gold brick with you."

"What nonsense!" cried Bobby. "President Aguerra showed his good sense and sound judgment. I explained the matter fully to him. Had I not believed in the practicability of our plans, I should never have advocated their adoption. Why, man alive, it is the biggest thing that ever struck the republic of Guadalayara, and if I had the time to go into the details with you, I could convince you of it."

"I'd rather admit it than to have the details," said Sandy. "I really believe, Bobby, that, as a promoter, you have got your father skinned a mile, and that is going some."

"It is the effect of the 'Vital Victualets,'" declared Bobby, "but I thank you for the compliment all the same. Now you can tell me what sort of a mess you have been into during my absence. I have heard all sorts of reports. One was that an anarchist had tried to blow you up or blow up the cafe and that you had almost killed him by a single blow. Now, I'm listening."

"The fellow was a drunken fool," said Sandy. "He was annoying a couple of women who sat at a table near by, and I asked him to cut it out. He didn't appear to fall in with the idea and made a gun play. Really, a fellow is liable to die with old age before these ducks down here can get a gun into action. I punched him one and the gun went off as he fell."

"Is that all?"

"All of him. I didn't see him any more. The crowd got excited at the sound of the pistol. They thought an anarchist or some revolutionist was about to muss up the crowd, and there was a panic and a rush for the outside."

"And the fellow who had the pistol? Did he hurt anybody?"

"I guess he didn't have much of a chance with all that crowd walking on him as they were trying to get out. I drifted out with the crowd and I didn't see him again."

"And the women?" queried Bobby.

Sandy colored.

"Do you know them?" he asked quickly.

"No; but I'm waiting to hear something about them. I've heard of them, and have seen them pass in their touring car. An interesting pair. Who are they?"

"I can give their names, and that is about all. The elder one is the Countess of Zara and the other her protege, Miss Bertha Dangerfield. When I came out of the cafe I found them standing by the motor car. Their chauffeur had disappeared, and as the women were very much frightened and wanted to get away from the place, I offered to drive the machine for them and they accepted my services. I ran the car up to the castle north of the city, on the mountain road, where they are staying. Say, Bobby, they are real people. They are not the kind that shy easily. Before we had got to the castle we were pretty well acquainted. They seemed to be pretty well onto all that was going on, and could give me tips about affairs in Guadalayara. They had heard of you as well as of the Great American Breakfast Food Company, and seemed to be in touch with everything going on in this neck of the woods. They would have me stop in a few minutes, and a servant brought wine and sandwiches, and while we ate and drank we got better acquainted. I never did bank much on the foreign nobility, but this Countess is sure the real thing, Bobby, and you would never have thought her guilty of being a Countess. And Miss Dangerfield, why, she's a wonder. I couldn't begin to describe her. When you look into her face and see her dark eyes looking at you you'll understand."

"No doubt," said Bobby, with a grin. "I am not anxious to try the experiment. But who was the fellow that was annoying the women? Not a friend of theirs, I hope."

"That," replied Sandy, "is something they did not explain, and was not my affair. They were glad to be relieved of his presence, which was sufficient. But Bobby, there is something about the women's presence at Dragon Castle that puzzles me. They are evidently there for a brief stay only. There is no one about the place, as far as I could learn, but the two women and the servants. They have been in Guadalayara but a short time, and came from Paris, if report be true. That is not all. They are here on some sort of a mission. That mission is one of danger. Of this there can be no doubt.

"I was about to leave when the Countess stopped me. She came very close and looked me straight in the eye as if to size me up.

"'Mr. McDonald,' she says, 'you may think it a little strange, but I am going to ask a favor of you.' I told her that I should be only too glad to serve her. 'You are an American,' she says, 'a man who has courage—who can face danger and not be afraid. I know it is presumptuous to ask you—a stranger—but the time may come when we shall need your help, and when that time comes would you, if we sent you a message, come to us?' She watched me with breathless interest. Miss Dangerfield was now at her side. Her eyes were on me and there was a light in them I shall never forget. There was but one thing for me to say. I told them that they might command me at any time; that there was no danger I would not face if by so doing I could give them protection. They thanked me over and over. Miss Dangerfield put out her hand. 'Forgive me,' she said, 'for asking this of you. I am—afraid!' Her hand trembled in mine, and there was a look of fear on her face. I repeated my assurance that I should be glad to offer my protection. I was driven back to town in the car by one of the servants. That is the end of my adventure."

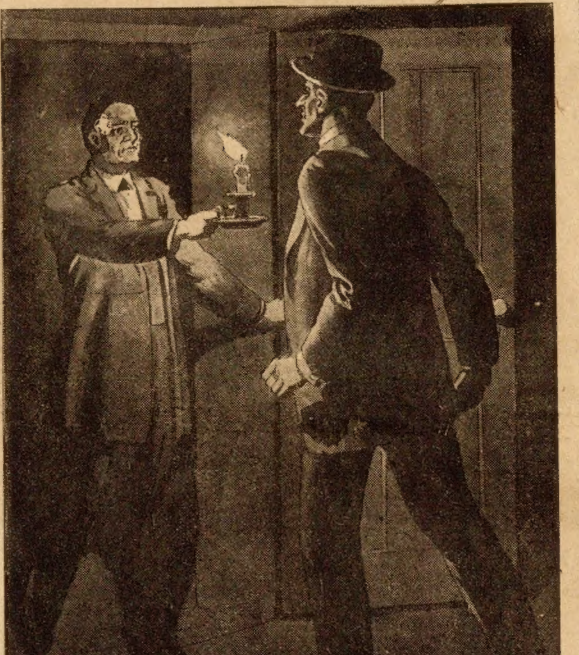
For some moments Henning did not speak. There was a thoughtful look on his face when at last he lifted it to Sandy.

"I am not going to say that you did wrong in making a compact with the two women," he said at length, "but there is a chance that you may regret it."

Sandy looked surprised.

"I don't understand," he said.

"This is a queer country," Bobby replied. "One can never tell what a day will bring forth. At present Guadalayara is in the throes of a revolution. General Pumar, the leader of the revolutionists, is now massing his forces in the interior. There is no telling when he will lead his army toward the capital. There is going to be some ugly work done unless the revolution is checked. President Aguerra is working night and day getting ready for the clash of arms that soon must come."



"Oh! It is Senor McDonald?"

"But in the name of goodness, Bobby, what has all this got to do with my promise to those women?" interposed Sandy.

"I am coming to that," replied Henning. "While the revolutionists are preparing for battle, the government is wide awake and alert to prevent outside aid from reaching the foe. Every stranger who comes to Guadalayara is watched. Spies dog his footsteps and his movements are constantly under the surveillance of the government. You are a stranger here. There is no doubt that the spies of the government have you under their eye, and that every movement you make is reported."

Sandy smiled.

"They are quite welcome to follow me," he said, "but still I can't see just what you are driving at."

"Only this," said Bobby, "it is reported that the Countess and her protege are in Guadalayara to give assistance to General Pumar, the revolutionist!"

CHAPTER V.

A CALL IN THE NIGHT.

The eyes of Sandy McDonald widened with amazement. But he said not a word. He leaned a little forward and

(Continued on page five.)

STRONGER THAN MEAT

A Judge's Opinion of Grape-Nuts.

A gentleman who has acquired a judicial turn of mind from experience on the bench out in the Sunflower State writes a carefully considered opinion as to the value of Grape-Nuts as food. He says:

"For the past 5 years Grape-Nuts has been a prominent feature in our bill of fare.

"The crisp food with the delicious, nutty flavor has become an indispensable necessity in my family's everyday life.

"It has proved to be most healthful and beneficial, and has enabled us to practically abolish pastry and pies from our table, for the children prefer Grape-Nuts and do not crave rich and unwholesome food.

"Grape-Nuts keeps us all in perfect physical condition—as a preventive of disease it is beyond value. I have been particularly impressed by the beneficial effects of Grape-Nuts when used by ladies who are troubled with face blemishes, skin eruptions, etc. It clears up the complexion wonderfully.

"As to its nutritive qualities, my experience is that one small dish of Grape-Nuts is superior to a pound of meat for breakfast, which is an important consideration for any one. It satisfies the appetite and strengthens the power of resisting fatigue, while its use involves none of the disagreeable consequences that sometimes follow a meat breakfast." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

* * *

When a man's wife tells another woman that there are no secrets between herself and her husband he goes out on the back porch and winks at the cat.

* * *

To Develop the Bust

To Beauty Editor: I am so ashamed of my thin bust that I want to ask you if there is any harmless way to develop it. My hips and the rest of my body are right for the present styles and I do not want them any larger, but my bust is so flat that I would try anything that gave hope of even three or four more inches development. MARY S.

The only thing I know of that will develop the bust without increasing the size of the hips, or without putting on flesh where not needed, is a prescription put up by The Dr. Kelly Co., especially for small and undeveloped breasts. It is the discovery of a woman physician whose practice was largely among her own sex and in most cases increases the bust measure four to six inches in a month. Send 10c to the Dr. Kelly Co., Dept. 92 H.A., Buffalo, N. Y., and they will send you a trial package of the treatment without charge. This is said to be of great value in cases of arrested development of the bust and will give a full, beautiful form without anyone knowing that the treatment was used.

Many mothers have told me that after the baby had been weaned, the breasts became flabby and shrunken, but the use of Dr. Kelly's prescription made them full and firm. Do not use pads or bust forms, as they never look natural and have a bad effect upon the general health. Neither would I recommend ordinary flesh builders or tonics, as they increase the hips and limbs and with the present styles the form should be slender everywhere except a generously developed bust.

* * *

Of course you are honest, but did you ever hear of any one going around looking for you in the daytime with a lantern?

* * *

DEAFNESS AND HEAD NOISES.

There's hope and joy ahead for thousands of deaf people who have tried patent ear-drums, medicines, etc., without success, for a skilled N. Y. physician has come to the front with a method of quick, easy, inexpensive, home treatment. Those who are hard-of-hearing or are troubled with ringing noises in the head should write to Dr. G. E. Coutant, 6 D, Station E, New York, N. Y., who will send his interesting book free. It is a happiness bringer. We believe that this explains, at last, the true method which deaf people have so long been seeking. The Doctor is receiving reports of surprising results in cases of people who had thought they could never hear well again.

* * *

Marriage frequently gives two otherwise agreeable people a chance to tell each other the disagreeable truth.

* * *

GOVERNMENT POSITIONS OPEN.

Any of our readers wishing a government position should send postal immediately to Franklin Institute, Dept. M-79, Rochester, N. Y., for full list of positions open. This list shows the salaries, the duties and tells how to get the positions.

* * *

It's easy for a woman who doesn't pretend to know anything to make a fool of a man who knows it all.

* * *

LADIES, PRESERVE YOUR YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results. Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.

(Continued from page four.)

waited in silence for Bobby to go on.

The two were seated on the wide veranda of Bobby's bungalow at the outskirts of San Vincente. The lights of the city twinkled through the gathering dusk, and the subtle perfume of flowers was in the air.

Henning calmly lit a cigarette before he spoke.

"You can easily see," he continued, "how you might be suspected of sympathizing with the revolutionists if you were known to be a visitor at Dragon Castle, admitting that its occupants are giving aid to General Pumar. It is a serious thing to get mixed up in an affair of this kind, and I am compelled to say that the two women are doing you a grievous wrong in making you a party to any political intrigue in which they may be involved. That is my view of the matter."

Sandy was silent for a moment.

"One may hear a great deal," he said, "especially in times like these. I am of the opinion that you have been misinformed. I do not believe that the women are mixed up in the affairs of the revolutionists. At least, I don't believe that they have any intention to involve me in it, even if they were friendly toward Pumar."

"That may be," admitted Henning. "I am not giving my statement as an established fact. It is merely a rumor, whispered about among those loyal to the president. What their suspicions are founded on, I have never tried to find out. But the fact that they have already told you that they may at any time be confronted with danger, and have asked your protection, goes to prove that they are engaged in some hazardous affair that is likely to provoke some one to do them harm. I think they might have confided in you sufficiently to have explained the character of the danger that threatened them before making appeal to you for protection."

"I should not think that necessary," replied Sandy. "The fact that a woman is in danger is sufficient to enlist my aid." He smiled as he lit a fresh cigarette. "Really, Bobby," he went on, "you wouldn't want a fellow to ask for references from a drowning woman before attempting to rescue her, would you? Well, I am hardly that particular, and if those women are blood-thirsty revolutionists, as is reported, I am inclined to be one myself. I envy General Pumar, I do, by George!"

"You are a hopeless case, Sandy," declared Bobby, "and I'm afraid I shall have to keep an eye on you or you'll be getting into all sorts of trouble." He yawned dismally. 'I'm going in and look over the New York papers that came in today."

He stepped through the low French window into his room which he used as an office. Paul Murray, his secretary, who had just finished writing some letters dictated by Henning, had picked up a copy of the New York Herald, and was scanning the first page.

"What is the news from Guadalayara?" laughed Henning, as he came in. "One usually must go abroad to get the news from home."

"There's a lot of rubbish about the revolution, but it is mostly a string of guesses," replied Paul. "There's an item about a fellow from Hoho who is butting in, that may interest you." He tossed the paper to Henning and took up the letters he had written. 'I will run down and post these letters," he said, "and get a bit of fresh air."

Henning ran his eyes over the paper, and the item referred to by Paul arrested his attention.

"There is much speculation just now," it ran, "regarding the appearance of the mysterious Mr. Moddington in Guadalayara. That he will take some important part in the affairs that are now disturbing the republic, seems certain. Mr. Moddington is reputed to be a man of immense wealth, and is an adventurer on a large scale. He is the man, it will be remembered, who figured prominently in the international muddle that took place in the little island of Hoho a few years ago, in which the Germans and the French were for a time at each other's throats over certain concessions. It is generally conceded that war between Germany and France would have resulted had not Mr. Moddington appeared, and in some mysterious way, brought about a compromise. Just how he accomplished this is not known to any one outside of the German and French diplomats. Moddington seems to have reaped a rich harvest out of the deal, and it may be that he is planning something of the kind in Guadalayara. He was in El Pozo yesterday, but when questioned by a representative of the Associated Press, he shrugged his shoulders and said he was merely in Guadalayara for his health."

Henning threw the paper aside, for at that moment the telephone bell on his desk rang sharply.

He took up the receiver and held it to his ear. The first words riveted his attention. The voice was that of a woman, soft, but vibrating with intense excitement. "I want Mr. McDonald," came the words, and Bobby thought he could hear the quick-drawn breath, "quick, please, if he is there!"

"Wait just a moment, please, and he'll come to the 'phone," said Bobby, and then to Sandy, "Come in Sandy, there's a call for you, and be quick!" His blood was tingling with excitement, for he had guessed that the voice he had listened to came from Dragon Castle.

Sandy slipped into the room at a bound, seized the receiver and bent forward eagerly. "This is McDonald," he said. "Oh, I'm so glad!" came the voice in reply. "This is Miss Dangerfield——" There was a note of terror in the voice. "We—we want you—we are dreadfully frightened!—do hurry, please—be careful—bring a pistol—are you listening?—" Something snapped and tne voice ceased.

Sandy called again and again, but there was no answer. A startling conviction seized him. The wire had been cut! Some devilish work was afoot, and all communication between the two helpless women and any one who might come to their help had been cut off.

Sandy wheeled quickly.

"Bobby, it's the women at the Castle," he said, "and they have asked for help. Call a cab for me, will you, while I get ready!"

He went to his room and in a few moments returned. He thrust an automatic .38 into his pocket.

"I may have to muss up some one," he said, calmly.

"What's up?" Bobby asked. "Did they explain?"

"I think some one cut the wire while we were talking," Sandy replied. "I must hurry."

"By George!" ejaculated Henning, his eyes flashing. "If there is going to be that sort of a game you can count me in!"

Sandy flashed a surprised glance at Bobby.

"Do you mean to say that you are going with me?" he asked.

"Do I look like a man who would sit here and twirl his thumbs while a friend went to the front to battle with some heathens who are making war on helpless women?" demanded Bobby.

"Not a bit!" laughed Sandy. "I know you well enough to have guessed that you'd want into the game as soon as there was a prospect of something doing."

Bobby laughed as he dropped a box of cartridges into his pocket.

"We may have to put down a revolution or something of the sort," he remarked.

The two went down to the gate, and stood waiting impatiently for the cab.

The night had fallen swiftly, and the thin clouds that obscured the stars intensified the gloom. Fireflies flashed their lights amid the dark foliage of the bamboos, and the odor of rank vegetation filled the air.

In a few moments there was a flash of light down the road, and presently the dark outlines of a cab came into view, turned swiftly into the cross street and stopped before the gate.

Sandy thrust a ten-dollar gold-piece into the driver's hand and followed Bobby into the vehicle. His knowledge of Spanish consisted of what he had picked up among the Mexicans on the range, but it sufficed to convey to the driver the necessity of rapid transit; had it failed in this, the gold itself which he had given to the driver, would have proved a sufficient and eloquent interpreter.

There was no doubt that the driver had understood, for as the cab swung into the road leading to the north, it took the road like a thundergust.

Sandy leaned back in his seat and tried to think coherently, for his mind had been set in a whirl by the sudden and unexpected call into the realms of strange adventure.

What danger threatened the two women? Could it be that the stranger who had annoyed them at the cafe was at the bottom of it? Or was it of a still more serious character—something connected with the revolution?

Sandy pondered over these questions in the darkness and silence as the cab was whirled rapidly up the mountain road.

Within a mile of Dragon Castle Sandy ordered the driver to stop and extinguish the lights.

"We don't want to herald our coming," he said. "There may be some sneak prowling about the place that we want to put our hands on before he can get away."

The panting team swept on, and when within two hundred yards of the Castle a halt was called, and Sandy and Bobby got out. Instructing the driver to remain in waiting till they should return, the two walked briskly up the road.

The great building, with its stone turrets loomed dark and forbidding against the sky. No lights were visible, and a deathly silence reigned.

The ancient gate stood open, and the two passed into the grounds and up the broad walk toward the building.

They walked with noiseless tread, keeping alert for any prowler that might be skulking there, but no sign of life greeted their vision.

Sandy was oppressed by a vague fear that he had come too late. What might have happened during the interval that had elapsed since the call had come to him over the 'phone?

He strode forward swiftly and noiselessly and stepped upon the wide stone steps that led up to the massive door. Here the two paused for a moment to glance about them and to listen.

But still there was no sign of life without or within. Sandy approached the door and knocked. The sound of his knocking echoed dismally, but brought no response. He waited for a full minute, then the knocking was repeated. Still there was no response.

A vague sense of alarm for what might have happened to the two women assailed Sandy. He chewed savagely at the unlighted cigar between his teeth, while his soul was beset with suspense and apprehension.

CHAPTER VI.

"A RELATIVE."

From all appearances, the place was deserted, but this only served to intensify Sandy's feelings of grave apprehension. He held a hurried consultation with Henning.

"You can keep watch here and give me warning if you discover any one," Sandy said. "Meantime, I shall make a reconnaissance. The devils, whoever they are, may be 'possuming on us, but I'm going to smoke them out."

He slipped his pistol from his pocket and stole noiselessly from the steps and made his way toward the rear of the building.

The black shadows of the palms that grew almost against the wall of the building intensified the darkness, and he was compelled to grope his way.

Even in the darkness there were visible signs of neglect. A rank growth of vegetation peculiar to the tropics covered the grounds and invaded the very building itself. Masses of tangled creepers, exuding noxious gums, tripped his feet as he pushed his way along the wall.

He turned several angles in the wall and arrived at last at the rear of the north wing. Here he paused to make a survey of his surroundings. He stood silent for a few moments listening intently, but the silence was unbroken save by his own breathing.

The part of the building which he now made an effort to inspect, was, as he discovered, partly in ruins, and through a gap in the wall he made his way to the inside.

It was too dark for him to see anything, and he groped his way blindly over piles of vine-covered stone till his hands at last came in contact with a wall.

He paused here for a moment, and then lighting a match, he took a quick survey of his surroundings.

The walls about him were in a state of ruin, more or less, but to his right was a stone stairway leading upward. Still holding the lighted match in his hand, he hastily ascended. At the landing above he paused before a wooden door which was half broken from its hinges.

Sandy lit another match, and swinging the door aside, pushed through the opening to find himself in a sort of alcove, cut off from a large room by a wooden partition. The doorway leading from the alcove was covered by rough boards nailed across the opening, one of which had been broken off.

Through this aperture Sandy crept, entering a wide hall which led into the main building.

As he stood for a moment listening, a door suddenly opened on his left and a man appeared, a lighted candle in his hand.

He was of medium stature, with a pair of dark eyes and a swarthy complexion. His small eyes blinked at Sandy and he made an attempt at a bow.

"Ah! it is Senor McDonald?" he said, speaking in English, but with a foreign accent. "Will the senor step this way? The Countess awaits him."

Sandy was speechless with amazement. The man was evidently one of the servants, but if the Countess was waiting to receive him, why had his knocking not been answered? But the fact that the man knew his name and seemed to know of the appointment he had with the women, was sufficient to quiet any suspicion that he was playing a part.

He stood in a respectful attitude, holding the door ajar as he spoke, and Sandy entered. The man led the way through a wide room containing a few articles of furniture dark with age. Opening a door on the left, Sandy's conductor ushered him into another room sumptuously furnished, and lighted a massive candelabrum. The room was without an occupant, but Sandy was requested to be seated and his presence would be announced.

The man went out at another door, and a moment later the door reopened and there entered—not the Countess, but a stranger who smiled blandly as he came in. It required no second glance for Sandy to recognize the man. He was the same man who had annoyed the Countess and her companion at the French cafe.

"I think we have met before, Mr. McDonald," he said with a smile, speaking in good English, but with a peculiar accent. "But I hope the little unpleasant affair that resulted from our first meeting has been forgotten."

Sandy regarded him searchingly.

"I came here to see Miss Dangerfield

(Continued on page nineteen.)

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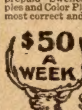

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The Sea Trailer;

Or, AFLOAT WITH BUCCANEERS

By WILLIAM H. MANNING

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CHAPTER XI.

THE FATAL NIGHT.

THE pirate captain was fully dressed, even to sou'westers, and his angry manner indicated that he was out of patience with the weather. He passed by Barron without a noticeable glance, walked heavily to the door that led to the companionway, and so disappeared from view. When he was gone Barron hoped that Miriam would return, but she did not come. Believing that she knew cabin conditions better than he, he made no effort to summon her, and after a few minutes went to awaken the steward.

The chance for a private talk of greater length had gone, and, disappointed though he was, he was not sorry that she had refrained from additional words. She had, however, plunged him into great perplexity. He was ready to believe that Piper would ransom only his own party, and that the sailors from the Royal Oak were destined to remain members of the buccaneer crew, but mystery was thick about his own case.

He was marked for slaughter by Captain Duke, but why? And had Piper really part in dooming him?

Miriam's incomplete, hurried words supplied him with the only theory that then came to him. If Piper had objected to her conversations with him aboard the Royal Oak there must be a reason for it. A possible reason occurred to him. Mrs. Piper always slow-witted, was no longer young, and surely she was not attractive. Could it be that Piper held a tender feeling for his wife's maid, and that he aspired to divorce, or otherwise dispose of his wife and put Miriam in her place?

It was a reasonable idea, and he grew to worry about her safety. This danger overshadowed his own peril, especially as the one seemed almost a visible trouble while the other was too shadowy to be grasped. Why, since he was serving faithfully, should Captain Duke put him out of the way?

All through the forenoon the Sweeping Broom ran before the gale, and there were times when she labored so greatly, groaning under the fierce pounding of the seas, that a timid man might well have feared for her safety, while the course of the captain in having the well frequently sounded showed that he feared lest a butt be started or a seam opened that would bring something far worse than bilge into their lower hull. Toward noon, however, there was a rise in the barometer, and some of the oldest seamen, though not aware of the fact, prophesied a falling off of the howling wind.

It was six bells when Eli Dodd managed to get a word with Barron.

"D'ye know where we are?" he asked.

"Not within two hundred miles," the American replied.

"I can guess just a bit nearer than that. I know our latitude and longitude when the Royal Oak went down, or nighabouts so; and I can reckon rather well from what has happened since. Know where we are I don't, but I feel sure there are lumps of land this way."

"That does not mean anything while the gale holds."

"Right, sir, but let it break and let land show off our deck and our chance will have come. Are you ready to leap overboard and swim for it then?"

"Yes. We shall not be in the track of any honest ship, I fear, but it shall be risked."

"Get me to an island that has any wood on it, and if I can't build a tolerable raft I don't ask for a chance."

Here the conversation ended, and soon after Barron prepared to do his part in the almost impossible task of preparing dinner. The galley fire was in constant danger of being flooded, but Benito was a master of devices, and he never complained when things went wrong.

Once more Barron went to the cabin to aid the steward. When he arrived there was only one person visible. It was Miriam. She saw him, glanced anxiously toward the closed doors beyond, and then rose and started toward her own room. She moved in silence, but as she passed she thrust a folded poper into his hand. Then she disappeared.

Imitating her caution he pocketed the paper, and it was an hour before he had a chance to examine it. When the chance came he read, and this is what he found:

"Let me warn you again that your life depend upon your getting away from this vessel quickly. It seems folly to say that, situated as we are, but some opportunity may occur. Maybe we shall come to land, for Mr. Piper talks about our being near some islands. If you can, go, go, go! I dare not talk with you, for suspicions would be aroused, and I have time to write no more. Go! Go, and do not fear that I shall be molested here. I have learned Piper's plan fully, and he will save me as a tiger would its food. Your going will aid me as well as yourself. My home address is St. Mary's, Pentwick, Essex, England. Again I say you can do me no good here. Do not fear for me. Save yourself!"

He read to the last word, thrust the note into his pocket and stood in thought.

She was right; he could do her no good by lingering in the schooner. One man against fifty would be odds so overwhelming that only a madman would undertake it. Clearly, Piper was going to ransom her, and then would be the time, if ever, for him to act in her behalf. That she hoped for something of the kind seemed likely from the tone of her communication. Else why had she given her home addres. Plainly, she did not desire that their acquaintance should end abruptly.

Neither did Barron. When aboard the Royal Oak he had found pleasure in her company without taking the trouble to ask himself why. The time in the Sweeping Broom, limited as it had been, had brought him keen worry for her safety. His own welfare, and even the troubles of the convict in the Australian bush, had been less in his thoughts than her situation among the human monsters of the sea. Now, he was beginning to know why, though the idea had not yet shaped itself in fully definite form.

Before mid-afternoon there was a very perceptible falling off in the rigors of the gale. The wind abated greatly, the rain ceased, and the clouds lifted so that it was possible to see for some miles outboard. Being far off his course Captain Duke was now anxious to shift his helm and bring the schooner upon a tack that would send her back into his usual cruising grounds, but the seas were still driving with a harsh send, and as the foremast had suffered an injury it was not possible to go about.

That injury was the cause of violent words aft, for it was plain that they must rig a jury-mast, and that meant some delay in quarter-deck projects. However, with weather conditions favoring, it was altogether likely they could lie to before morning and put themselves into shape, and Duke finally grew more amiable.

Twilight found the Sweeping Broom running easily before the seas, small sail set and all attention bent to the task of handling her to the best advantage. Barron was standing by the rail, thinking of his apparently hopeless situation, but planning to overcome all obstacles. Piper and his party were below, but the Queen was on deck with the pirate chief, and Barron saw with wonder that their manner was almost lover-like. Deeply as Duke was stained with blood, he held the affection of his wife, and she lacked something of being a desperate woman. It was hard to credit that she was so devoted to the freebooter.

Mockrod had the watch, and he paced and attended to duty, but once more Barron noticed that he sent swift, secret glances at the Queen as if he wished himself in Duke's place.

The crew were making a brave effort to get back to their usual habit of idling when not needed for work, and Zorr Rogel was the center of their group. He had a story to tell, and their frequent outbursts of laughter indicated that it was amusing. Zorr never looked Barron's way, but maintained the aloofness he had shown ever since joining Duke's crew. He had, it seemed, forgotten that Barron lived.

Perhaps this was as well, but the younger man resented it. When he was made assistant cook he was given a more humble position than Rogel's, and now he hung remote. Except for that he would have been invited to join in the contemplated escape, but Barron felt hard toward his old associate. Rogel had promptly taken the safer end of the plank when they were in the water, and now he not only offered no thanks but held apart from the man who had saved his life.

Barron was meditating upon this when he was softly touched upon the arm. Turning, he saw Eli Dodd.

"Look to starboard," directed the sailor quietly.

Barron looked and started.

"Land!" he exclaimed.

"Ay, land," Eli agreed. "That means an island, for there can be nothing else hereabouts."

"Strange the crew have not discovered."

"It was done some time ago, but you were too deep in thought to notice."

"What land can it be?"

"Even Duke don't know, for I heard him say as much. You are aware he has not been able to take the sun since the gale pounced upon us. Our latitude and longitude is a mystery even to him."

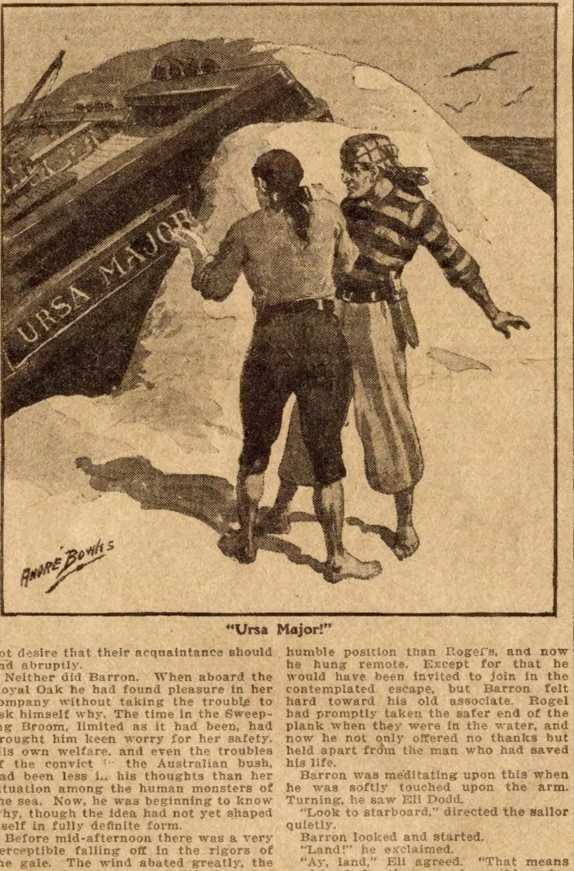
"How far away is the island now?"

"Well, it is broad on our beam, and I reckon four miles off. Lift what's left of the mist and we would have it right plain."

"It's a fair sized strip of land."

"Rather a decent lump, sir. Its breadth we can't guess, but I should say it fronts us for nigh two miles. Pity the sea ain't calm. With the dark over the water I'd risk a drop right now, if 'twas less rough."

"No swimmer could live in this sea, but, Eli, we return this way, don't we?"



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"It's pretty sure we shall, but 'this way' don't mean that we shall surely fetch within sight of the island. We may run within a cable-length of her beach, and then, again, we may be ten miles distant, or even out of sight of her. The road of the sea is uncertain."

"Let us hope——"

"We will, sir, but we have hung together long enough just now."

Eli sent an anxious glance around and moved away, leaving Barron gazing at the land. It was a fascinating bit of earth. Possibly it was inhabited by hostile natives, or perhaps the trees that showed above it were the only friendly feature of the place, and perhaps a castaway would starve there; but it was no time to reject a hope, no matter how vague.

Better to starve on the island than to be butchered in the schooner.

The land fell away from sight as the vessel held her way, but if Duke was indifferent to the one he was not to the other. Before midnight he brought the Sweeping Broom to, and men were set to work upon repairs. The task was more difficult than had been anticipated, and it was midday before the captain was satisfied with conditions aloft. Then, when he would have laid his course for the north, a weakness was found in the rudder gear, and the delay was prolonged.

All this was promising to Barron, for it gave force to the possibility that they would pass the island by night. But how near? The ocean was wide, and all depended upon a feeble chance. Perhaps, as they passed by, the island would lie twenty-five miles off their beam, unseen and unreachable.

It was four bells in the afternoon watch when the schooner took up her burden again. Bedecked aloft with canvas, she gained steerage-way and was soon thrusting her bows into the waters that rolled from the north with a sullen pitch, as if reluctant to give up the struggle against fair weather conditions. Despite the head sea the breeze was on the larboard beam, but it held the new quarter coyly, and the Sweeping Broom found it hard to reel off six knots.

While Barron and Benito were washing up after supper the cook was for a time in ill humor, and when he sat down and began puffing at his pipe he eyed his companion in an odd way. Barron noticed, but said nothing, and finally Benito broke forth crustily:

"You're the best galley mate I ever had," he grumbled; "you're willing to work."

"That's what I'm here for," quietly replied the unwilling pirate.

"Others have been here for that purpose, but work—not they! They were loafers, and bound to shift all the labor upon me. It's mighty hard to lose a good mate!"

Barron gave the cook a sharp glance.

"Do you expect to lose me?" he asked.

Benito smoked and looked at vacancy. He puffed at the pipe steadily, as if composed, but his brows were bent in a scowl. He meditated and finally found a reply.

"It won't do you any good to know," he decided. "Pirates need no time to repent, for repentance will do them no good. What's the odds? Take it when it comes, quick, short, sharp, sudden. That's the way. Die like a man. I've been thinking about that watch you carry. What use would it be to the fishes? Could they wear it in their vest pocket? Could they tell the time o' day? If I was going to die I would give my trinkets to my friends."

"Do you mean that I'm going to die?"

"Tonight!" said the cook placidly.

"How do you know?"

"Nobody else knows so much aboard ship as the cook. He feeds all stomachs, is talked to by all hands, overhears all hands talk when they intend to be secret, but fail. Now, what you've done to anger the captain I don't know, but he has decided."

"Decided upon what?" asked Barron persistently.

"He will make way with you tonight!"

CHAPTER XII.

ATTEMPTED ESCAPE.

Barron heard the declaration with less of emotion than if he had not already been so warned, but there was a disagreeable element in an announcement that timed his death to so small a point. Outwardly he was calm, and the puffs at his pipe were almost in unison with those of the cook, but he felt less composed than appearances indicated.

"How do you know all this?" he asked quietly.

"Overheard Captain Duke give orders to the mate. Seems it had been talked over between them before. The talk was brief. 'Tonight, at three bells of the first watch, Barron goes to the fishes,' was what he said. 'Ay, ay, sir,' says Mockrod calmly. 'I trust it to you,' says the captain. 'I'll fling him overboard like a sheeted man,' says the mate. 'Make sure,' says Duke; 'no failure, no outcry; but sure death.' 'He dies,' says Mockrod. That's all, mate. Now, what can't be helped isn't worth mentioning further, but that watch of yours—look you, I've been wronged of my plunder when we have sacked ships, and I have no decent timepiece. If you feel like willing yours to me—why, it's to get it that I've warned you. What do you say?"

"Suppose I resist being drowned?"

"Resist?" echoed the cook, opening his eyes widely.

"Yes."

"I don't understand."

"Suppose I don't like being drowned?"

"Nobody does, but Captain Duke's orders go, mate. Nobody ever says 'no' when he orders a thing. Of course it will be done, and after having seen how well you work in the galley I know you will act like a gentleman when you're being drowned."

"Possibly! Any more particulars?"

"No."

"Do you understand that I am to be picked up bodily and thrown over the rail?"

"That's the usual way in this ship. Saves a lot of trouble."

Benito had no thought of jesting. He disliked to lose his assistant at cooking, but since it must be so he accepted his misfortune with easy unconcern. Death never worried him when it was somebody else who died, and all he was anxious about was to get the watch. His mind was set at ease on this point when Barron promised to place the timepiece in a certain part of the galley at two bells in the fatal hour. Then the cook shook his hand and vowed he was the prince of good fellows.

Having made his will, as it were, Barron strolled out upon the deck. Under different circumstances it would have been an agreeable place at that time. The air had fully cleared, the westerling sun shone brightly, and even the sea was losing the sharp send that had fretted the cutting bows at the start. The vanquished gale had given room to delightful weather. In a way Barron was conscious of this, but a condemned man fails to find a charm in what may interest others.

Standing by the starboard rail he gazed off across the water. Far away the blue of the sky met the blue of the sea, the two combining their vanguards so perfectly that the sky-line was only a thread of a slightly varied hue, but not even a dot marked that line.

No land was in sight.

He looked long and meditated, and then sent a glance forward to where Eli Dodd lounged with the other men. He was fortunate enough to meet his regard quickly, and he made a slight gesture. Eli rose, moved about for a time, as if idly, and then sauntered to where Barron stood. The latter lost no time in speaking.

"You will have to give up your plan," he said quietly.

"Why?" Eli asked.

"There is no land in sight, and Captain Duke has planned to kill me tonight at three bells in the first watch. I am to be flung overboard as secretly as possible."

"Well, you want to go overboard, don't you?"

"Not until land is in sight."

"Bah! But how do you know all this?"

Barron told him briefly, whereupon Eli swept the horizon keenly.

"It goes without saying," Barron added, "that I must get ahead of their time. At two bells I am going over the bulwark. I shall lay hold of a plank, a box or a spar and fling myself clear. Very likely I shall drown, but better that than to go without any support, as will be the case if I let them do the flinging of me-over. I am telling you this because the new turn of affairs shuts you out of my dubious fortunes. As there will be no land in sight you must not leap into death's arms to keep me company."

"So we must drop our plans of going together?"

"Yes."

"So you say, but we won't do it. At two bells I'll be ready to bear a hand, and we will seek the water together. Anything but this villainous life here. I'll stick to you."

"On a plank in mid-ocean, almost without food——"

"I'll go if I go alone!"

It was stubbornly said, and Barron could not shake the stout sailor's decision. Eli had worried more than anybody else of the Royal Oak's old complement, and he was eager to escape. Finding that he was firm they swiftly planned as to the momentous hour.

Three things were absolutely necessary—drinking water, food and a support. Barron's position as cook's assistant made it easy for him to secure the first two, though he could take but a limited supply of either. As for the support, a box was conveniently placed on deck, but they dared not make use of it.

"It will soon be wholly dark," said Barron, summing up. "I don't think they will back their topsails when they know we are over the rail; in fact, it is practically certain they will not; but we have reason to dread bullets. A box would set high, making a good target even in the night, but a plank will lie low. A plank it must be."

It was so settled, and they separated to await the time of action.

Darkness fell, and though the night was moonless the evening was so pleasant that all of the cabin party were on deck. The queen was there, hovering near Captain Duke; and there, too, were the Pipers and Miriam. The deck lanterns were freely alight, and the space was bright from stern-post to the bows.

Barron idled by the galley, now and then sending a glance at his former fellow passengers. Oftenest his regard lingered with Miram, and he noticed that, unusually silent, she frequently glanced his way. He was, however, surprised when, presently, she roamed briefly about and then came directly to his side. He saw that she was pallid, and that her face was vexed as if by physical pain. Out of this tangle of worry looked eyes that were frightened and suffused with tears.

"It is to be tonight!" she breathed huskily.

"So I have been secretly informed," Barron responded.

"What will you do, oh! what can you do?"

"Leap overboard before the pirates act."

"Into the wide ocean?"

"Land was off our beam yesterday, and I hope to fetch to it now."

"But it is not in sight. How can you reach it? Yes, and which way are you to go in seeking for it?"

"Due east," answered Barron, as steadily as though he really knew.

"God help you!" she breathed faintly. "Oh! I am so much, so very much afraid. These men are devils in human form. Oh! the base cowards, to so war upon one single man. I wish I could do something, help you, share your perils, anything—but I am helpless."

It was feverishly said, but the words touched him keenly. It was something new to have any one so deeply interested in his welfare, and as he looked into her face his heart added beats to its regular throb. Like Miriam, he wished she could share his fortunes under certain conditions, in time of adventure, if need be, though not with death holding all the visible cards in the game. He longed to take her hand, to thank her warmly, but knew that even quick, pointed words were dangerous. He curbed his feelings, but Miriam rose to a new point in his consideration.

She explained that she had gained her newest information by further listening when Captain Duke talked to Piper, and he, in return, briefly outlined his plans. Then, after a promise that, if life was spared to him, he would sometime seek her in her English home, she prepared to go.

"But," he urged, "are you sure, quite sure, that you will be well treated here, and soon released? Otherwise I will not leave this ship and deprive you of the help I might possibly give you."

"Have no fear. Mr. Piper has a strange power over Captain Duke, they being like brothers, as I may say; and the pirate had agreed, as before stated, to ransom us all. Have no fear. The Pipers would not lose me. I shall be well used. Think only of yourself, and go!"

She slipped away, rejoining her companions aft. Barron watched to see how she was received, but Piper was busy talking with Duke, and as Mrs. Piper rarely had any deep emotion, there was no immediate trouble.

In spite of all that had been said Barron was filled with fear for Miriam, and though his reason told him that it was best he should trust to her confident claims, he dreaded leaving her friendless more than he dreaded the perils of the sea he was soon to dare.

Darkness had fallen and the Sweeping Broom was eating her way into the miles as she footed it for her proper station in the northern waters. Going, she sent to listening ears the song that the canvassed vessel gives when her keel flirts aside the contesting waves and the sails and cordage talk with the wind, but it was not of this that Barron thought. Doomed, he had planned a bold stroke for life, and the hour for action approached.

Would he succeed? Could he and Eli fling the plank overboard and launch themselves after it without being shot in the act? Perhaps the pirates were looking for just such a step, and ready weapons would belch forth life-rending bullets.

Off the schooner lay the night, darker than Barron had dared expect, and he could see but a comparatively short distance. Into that black expanse he must go, trusting to a hope that was miserably small. To cling to a frail support, to subsist on rations that, at the best, would last but a very short time, to be buffeted by the seas and then—what? Death claimed nine chances out of ten.

Shortly before the appointed hour Eli, who was in the watch then on deck, sauntered near his chosen mate.

"Ready?" he asked softly.

"All ready," Barron replied.

"The board is yonder."

"Yes."

"Things are quiet. I'll come back directly and we will try it. You have food and water?"

"Yes. All has been done that can be done."

The sailor moved away and his ally was alone. It was a vast risk, and the fact that they were farther south than the usual path of trading vessels was ominous, but the die was cast.

Standing there Barron's thoughts dwelt strangely upon Miriam. He hoped all would be well with her, but he was worried. Yet, unless he went he would be a dead man within an hour, and he could better serve her alive than if at the bottom of the ocean. He would go.

(Continued on page eight.)

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The way of the transgressor is hard but smooth.

Even a stingy man loosens up when asked for advice.

Murder will out—and so will the foolish things you do.

Many a man who thinks he is wise is unable to prove it.

Anyway, there is nothing monotonous about the weather.

Some men look upon laws as things merely to be broken.

What a hard worker you are—when you have occasion to tell it.

Sometimes a man's idea of economy is to tell his wife how to save money.

In the midst of a proposal a man's heart palpitates less than his knees.

Only a girl with tiny feet and a genuine complexion enjoys being caught in a rainstorm.

A little travel is a dangerous thing. It may make a fool of a man upon a great many subjects.

There are others besides the theatrical manager who spend a lot of money to make a show.

A wise girl is indisposed when a young man calls unexpectedly after she has been eating onions.

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A man's idea of a real vacation is to get so far away from home that he won't have to live up to his reputation.

The average man has but three ambitions: One is to become rich and the other two are to become richer.

Your enemies are seldom as black as they are painted, or your friends as white as they are whitewashed.

A mother is always outwardly proud of her baby if it looks like its father, but inwardly she may regret it.

You wonder why you have more trouble than other people, and they wonder why you have less trouble than they do.

There are times in the life of every small boy when he would like to assume the role of father to the man for a few brief moments.

(Continued from page seven.)

Presently Eli again glided to his side.

"Now!" said Barron evenly.

He picked up the board, moved to the rail and gently lowered it as far aft as he dared. Both the adventurers had expected that this step would be noticed, and that they would necessarily make a wild plunge to follow, but all remained calm. Quickly but quietly they swung themselves over the rail, stayed their course, momentarily in the channels, and then dropped into the water. Still the alarm was delayed.

Both were strong and skilful swimmers, and after a struggle they managed to draw clear of the suction and whirl of the water that beat along the hull. By that time the schooner was receding, but her wide, milk-white wake remained like a vast sword of snow, and at its farther side the adventurers tossed in the tumbling medley.

Their heads showed black in the smother, but there was no alarm on the deck.

Naturally, as the fear of bullets lessened, they gave their chief thought to the plank upon which so much depended. It was finally located as it danced almost cork-like in the wake, and they hastened to commit themselves to its bosom. Eli had stuffed his jacket with small rope, and, anxious to husband their strength, they lashed themselves without delay, thus taking the strain from their arms.

"Well," the sailor then exclaimed, "this is what I call stiff good luck. Not a shot, and not a yell. Good! Fact is, mate, if they had seen us our chances would have been skeleton poor. Why, in that wake our heads would have been a royal fine target."

"Providence was with us."

"Ay, ay, sir! That was just it."

"We are safe enough for tonight. Our muscles will hardly mind so few hours, but after all that—well, do you think we have fetched nigh the land we saw yesterday?"

"If not we will go there tomorrow."

"We will try."

It was well said by both, but they did not know whether the land lay to the east or west of them. Which way were they to go? With no power of locomotion but their hands they were adrift in mid-ocean.

CHAPTER XIII.

A STARTLING DISCOVERY.

The island lay in the ocean like a plaything of the watery expanse, so small was it in the wide waste; though hardly a toy that completely filled the demands of the eye. Some two miles long it was half as wide, presenting, on all sides, a narrow beach to the rolling seas. From that point it fell back in a gradually rising way until, near mid-island, a long ridge arose three hundred feet in air. Seen from the shore, this ridge was partly clad in thrifty trees, though at other points no more than barren rocks. At the approximate center a single cone rose a hundred feet above all other points, and, being oddly tree-covered, it had the shape of an umbrella.

Two men waded through the water just off the beach, bearing a plank to which they were lashed, plodded on until they reached dry land, and then, too greatly wearied to care for anything but rest, dropped to the level and lay silent.

Barron and Eli had worried the night through without grievous mishap, but the pitch and dash of the waves and the frail nature of their support had taxed them almost to the limit, and the land was welcome to a degree hard to understand. In a waste of death it had been outcropping life. At dawn they had found themselves within a mile, though this was purely the luck of the sea, and they had laboriously paddled to the sands. For a second time the Virginian owed his life to a plank.

The pirate schooner was nowhere to be seen.

For a time they lay resting, and then Barron drew his knife and severed the lashings that held them to the plank. He stood erect, though Eli was content to remain where he was.

"We have beaten the ocean," said the younger man, looking toward the grim ridge. "What will be the result of a fight with the island?"

"Another win," the sailor answered listlessly. "We can beat land any time, unless—"

"There is no unless about it!" exclaimed the Virginian. "We shall win. This pocket island is a stepping-stone to the world of life and action. After we have regained our normal condition we will build a raft and set forth for Sydney."

"I'm with you, sir, but which way do we go? What island is this, anyhow? Where does it lie? Which way must we go to reach Sydney?"

"Unless we can settle that proposition we will wait for a south wind and then go north, trying to reach the track of merchant vessels. If we are cunning enough to construct a sail from something herebaouts, that help and the run of the seas will fetch us into the trading road. I wish I had made myself familiar with this southern half of the ocean. Perhaps a little reading would do it here, for the cone that surmounts the ridge is peculiar. Its umbrella-like shape is very unusual—"

Eli whirled over, gained his knees, rose, looked and then slapped his thigh boisterously.

"Why, mate, I know where we are. I've often heard mention of it in the fok'sle, and once I see it with my own eyes when driven south by a gale just like the last. Why, that island is Torrento!"

Barron wheeled upon his comrade sharply.

"What?" he cried.

Eli answered wonderingly, and, gazing at the other man, he saw with further surprise that his face was full of eagerness, together with something more the sailor could not interpret.

"The Torrento that lies near Burford's and Kelwin's islands?" Barron demanded.

"That's the very one. I've seen them all though mightly little I know of them. Never set foot ashore anywhere hereabouts."

"What is known of Torrento?"

"Nothing, so far as I've heard tell. No ship ever visits these waters unless driven by hard luck, and when one does it has no business to call its men ashore on these miserable little dots of land. This here Torrento is a mighty good little foot-hold for a man, shipwrecked but that's all."

Barron did not dispute this verdict openly, but he held different views. He remembered with keen distinctness the map that had been brought to view when Benito's book fell hard by the fire in the schooner's galley, and all of the remarkable adjuncts of that drawing—his father's name at the foot of the page, and the word "treasure" boldly written across the island of Torrento.

It was an amazing freak of fortune that had brought him to the land that was the keynote of the map.

He did not see fit to speak too freely then, but after a few minutes the men gave heed to their stomachs, eating one-third of their remaining food. This store, together with their pistols, a little powder and a supply of tobacco had been lashed to their necks during their time adrift, and, being in waterproof covers, was uninjured. After eating Eli was anxious to smoke, and Barron joined him, but when it was done and their strength additionally recruited, the younger man could endure delay no longer.

It was not necessary to mention treasure to make it plain that they should speedily see all of their ocean kingdom, and they climbed the ridge together, passing well north of the umbrella-like cone. From that spot the farther narrower side of the island was open to view.

It was a place at once more promising and more forbidding than the part first seen. Fruit trees were visible, and at least two fine brooks coursed down from the high land to plunge into the sea. Water fowl poised in the trees or passed on easy wings, and there were some signs of small animals. This was a glad sight, but the way was much rougher than on the other side, and small spurs extended from the parent ridge almost to the water, making the whole region rocky, gullied, and harsh to the sight.

"No fear of starvation right a while," said Eli, chuckling.

"We can subsist until we have a raft ready," Barron.

"Two men could live here for years. Nature would keep up the supply of eatables. There would be natural shelter in time of driving tempests, too, I reckon. Look at the clefts that seam this slope below us. There must be many a nook there where a man could hide from rain and winds. A cave is possible, though I won't claim that much."

"Let us learn just what we have inherited. We will explore the whole region, and then select our living place. It should be near where we are to build our raft."

"Your mind seems powerfully set on getting clear, mate."

"It is powerfully set. I am on my way to Sydney, and get there I will at the earliest moment. I am only one man, but the vast Indian Ocean shall not stop me."

Eli looked in surprise at his companion. With the return of hope the Virginian had fallen into the embrace of his ruling passion again, and his thoughts were centered upon Australia, the bush-lands, and a certain convict who toiled there under an unjust sentence. Though Torrento Island was a magnet in view of the fact that it held a mysterious treasure, it was no more than a stepping-stone to Clayton Barron's son. The convict was now the dominating factor in Reese Barron's life, and his bent brows and gloomy eyes gave the simple-hearted sailor something like a chill. A man who had a consuming purpose was worrisome to his placid temper.

He did not see fit to make reply, and they moved part way down the slope, testing the gurgling water of the nearest brook, and surveying the dark ravines, the loaded fruit-trees and the other objects close at hand. By noon they had walked the length of the island, finding no evidence of previous occupancy, and nothing to dispute them. They had dinner by a brook, and then Barron turned his gaze upon the east coast.

"Let's go and pick out a place to build our raft," he said. "The points of the side-ridges reach so close to the water that a diversified shore is open to us, and we shall have ample chance to select. We ought to be able to find a spot well suited to our needs."

Eli was not eager, for, after their late experiences, he felt that a few days of quiet and rest would not be unwelcome, but he made no remonstrance. They went, and surveyed the extremities of the nearest spurs for the first time.

"We can ask for nothing more in the way of shore," said Barron. "A raft can be handled anywhere along here. What we lack most seriously is an axe, nails and ropes. The latter we can construct from something in this tropical growth, but how are we to hew down the trees we need?"

"We will manage somehow."

"Perhaps we shall not need to fell anything. There is fallen timber, and, of course, our main sticks must be seasoned wood, to secure buoyancy. Tree-nails could be used the same as in build-

(Continued on page eighteen.)

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Ben Sheldon's Love;

Or, A SCOUT OF THE PLAINS

By Ella Martin

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CHAPTER XIV.

ONCE MORE ADRIFT.

WHEN Ben, the Scout, had led Jack a little to one side, he stopped and regarded the young man seriously for a second. Then he spoke:

"You may or may not be aware," he said, "that we are in sore straits this night; that our predicament is one we shall scarcely be able to get out of. In fact, I doubt if tomorrow's sun will find one of us alive unless——"

He paused and looked searchingly at Jack. "Unless," he continued, "Myrtle Wayne is not to be found in the camp of the emigrants when the redskins descend upon it."

"Do you mean," Jack demanded, "that she ought to return and give herself up—to go back and wed the chief to save the rest? She shall not—not even to save the lives of the whole party!"

"I don't mean exactly that," Ben Sheldon replied. "She might escape, you know. And if she is not found here the Indians may be persuaded to leave us alone. They are not easily intimidated with threats of soldiers from the fort; they like fighting too well for that. Besides, they might break camp and be far on their way to some other of their haunts before the soldiers could reach their village; and they most likely would after the battle—the massacre rather, was over."

"What are your plans?" Jack Dutton asked. "You do not intend to surrender Myrtle to them to save the others?"

"You ought to know me better than that. I am proposing that you two escape from the country in the way that I provide for you. For of course, you will not let her go unattended. I intend to give you and Myrtle a chance for your lives."

It was Jack's turn to scrutinize the other closely. Did he wish merely to secure the safety of himself and Myrtle? or would their absence from the camp so greatly benefit the movers? In fact, were they being turned adrift to save the emigrants from the wrath of the Indians when they demanded her at the scout's hands and he refused, as he must do, to surrender her?

"I understand," he said, at last. "We have brought about the trouble—we two—and we must take the consequences. We are outside your protection, and must take our chances on the plains. We will go, Myrtle and I, and we will perish together, if perish we must, and God grant the movers may profit by our absence."

"I hope you will not look at it in that light. I shall still consider you both my charges, and under my protection. But I sincerely believe that in sending you on I am doing the best for you as well as the rest. There is a better chance for you outside; and there is just a ghost of a chance that the emigrants may escape if we prove to them we are not harboring the one they most desire to obtain. Still, I greatly fear the maneuver will be in vain. If so, and we are obliged to fight the Indians, you two will have the only chance of escape. For outside, well mounted and provisioned, with a supply of ammunition, you might in time reach the settlement on the frontier."

"We will go at once," replied Jack. "Myrtle is wearied from her tramp over the side of the mountain; but she is plucky, and will obey at once."

"It is for all of our sakes, Jack."

"Yes, I know, Ben." And Jack Dutton grasped the hand of the guide.

"And Jack!"

"Yes!"

"Is it all well with you and Myrtle? You know what I mean."

"Yes, it is all right now. We are to be married at the first opportunity. And do you know, Mr. Sheldon, that what you thought was rash foolishness on her part was but a scheme to save the wagons from an attack? She overheard them talking, and knew that if she chose to go back she would be retaken and the emigrants massacred."

"Is this true, Jack?"

"It is what she told me."

"She is a good actress, then," Ben said, musingly, a quizzical smile playing about his mouth. "She seemed to be thoroughly in earnest when she refused to marry me to save herself."

"Her fate would have been the same had she chosen you—after the massacre. But I think she was in earnest, for she knew why you offered yourself. She believes in my devotion at last, and has concluded to reward it. And it is all because I was willing to give her up to you in order to save her."

"I congratulate you, Jack, for I consider Miss Wayne a hard one to woo and win."

"I suppose we must not delay," Jack said, changing the subject. "I will go and speak to Myrtle about it."

"Jack!" Ben called after him.

The other turned.

"What is it?" he said.

"You will not think I am sacrificing you for the sake of the others?"

"No; I can see the necessity of the experiment. But if you were it would be just."

"Good-by, Jack," the scout said, "and may luck attend you. God knows whether we shall ever meet again."

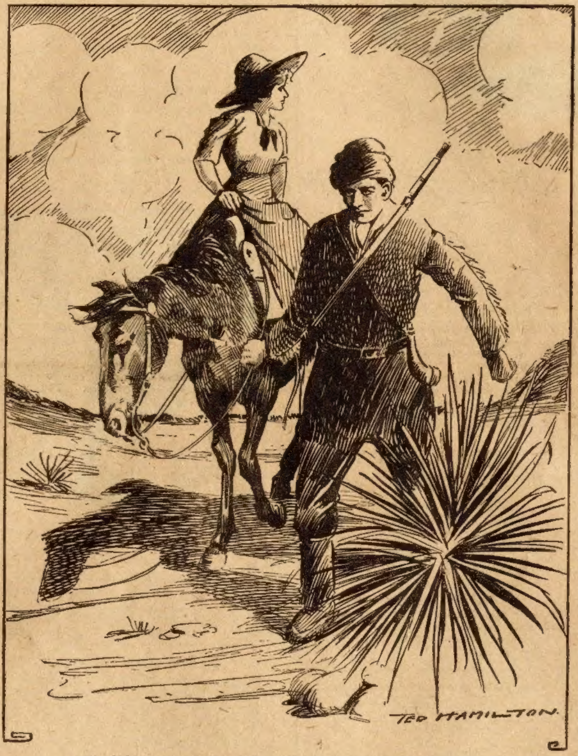
The two clasped hands for a moment, and then walked together back to the wagons.

Myrtle Wayne was inside the cavern, on a blanket some one had been kind enough to spread for her; and she looked weary enough to remain there until the night was over. She knew the danger the approaching night would bring them, but listless in the security of the present moment, she lay there wide-eyed, but resting.

There was no one present when Jack sought her, and for a moment he stood gazing down upon her, so helpless she looked in her almost exhausted state. More witching than ever looked the red lips, moist and slightly parted; the sparkling eyes, and rippling masses of hair. How could he tell her she must leave the safety of the cave, the protection of the emigrants, and that, too, before she had obtained the rest she needed.

Jack's eyes filled with tears, and seeing them she guessed that some calamity had befallen them, or was impending. She raised herself on her elbow and gazed at him with expressive, starry eyes. No wonder the Indians called her Star-of-the-Night, Jack thought. She was the star of his life, and he would rather go forth to face danger with her, than to remain behind and be sure of the utmost safety without her.

He dropped to one knee, and reaching out his arms drew her to him and held her close against his breast. So gentle and tender and devoid of passion was the action that Myrtle yielded herself to the embrace without resistance. Somehow, she felt that there was sympathy in the impulse that caused him to thus gather her to his heart, and the seriousness of his manner was like a benediction. She felt a solemn depression stealing over her, and she responded to his tender clinging kisses with tears in her eyes.


TED HAMILTON.

Straight toward the plain with Jack Dutton by her side.

And he told her as carefully as he could, that for the good of all concerned, herself more especially, they must go forth from the shelter they had found, from the midst of human companionship and the protection of the scout—outside into the night and the dangers of the plains. Wild beasts of the forest and plains and savage tribes of Indians might have to be encountered, and yet they would be safer than here, where Wind-that-Blows and his bloodthirsty warriors would seek and slaughter the palefaces.

"There are two evils, dear girl," Jack said, "and between them we will choose the lesser; or what the scout considers less for all concerned. I could wish it had come at a time when you were not already overcome with fatigue. But we will have horses this time."

"I am somewhat rested now," she said as he assisted her to her feet.

"You are a plucky little woman, Myrtle," he encouraged, "and I have no doubt we will reach the settlement in safety. We will halt and take a few hours rest as soon as we have left this place far enough behind to be out of danger."

By the time the two had descended from the cavern and joined those around the wagons, every one was acquainted with the plan the scout had for warding off from the emigrants the expected attack. All were loath to see the couple go forth, even from certain danger into possible safety. Even Mrs. Actkins wiped her eyes with a corner of her apron, but declared at the same time that Myrtle was needed where she was.

In a short time the two young people, who had now cast in their fortunes with each other for good and all, had taken their farewell of the camp, and were again fugitives fleeing this time from both friends and enemies.

And as they rode away from the rest of the party together, Myrtle began to feel as if there were just they two in the universe; and she felt nearer to Jack in that moment than ever before. He had left all to guide and protect her.

(Continued on page twelve.)

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When Truth Is in Fashion.

If the use of truth were to come into fashion we might hear the following instead of the customary conventionalities:

"Bridget, you needn't tell him I'm not at home; just say I don't want to see him."

"I may as well tell you, Mr. Cleary, that I am not buying this hair dye for an elderly friend; I expect to use it myself."

"I won't pretend, Mrs. Kawler, that the reason why I never have any photographs taken is because they never look like me; they always do."

"Gentlemen, I am not going to lie to you; my friends have not asked me to be a candidate for this office; I'm a candidate for it because I want the salary."

"Mr. Hiker, there's no use in pretending that I can wear a No. 4. I am not ashamed of the size of my foot. Show me a No. 6½."

"I don't know why I'm lending you this money, old chap; I do it with great reluctance."

"Dear Sir:—We return this story to you for the reason that it is absolutely worthless. We wouldn't publish it if you paid us for doing so."

"I am not surprised, Mr. Wellon, to learn that you are 59 years old. You look it."

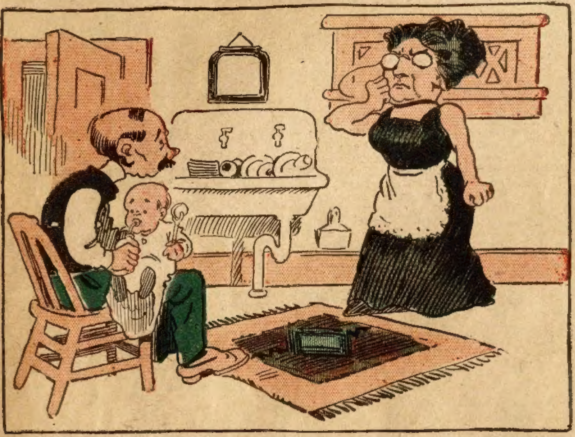
A Hearty Pig.

Caleb Peaslee gazed at his pig speculatively. It was a little pig—"Hardly make a meal for a growing boy," Mr. Peaslee had said—and it capered about the pen and stood with head uptilted to Caleb, pleading to be fed.

"I dunno what he doos with all the stuff we give him to eat," urged Mr. Peaslee plaintively. "I don't see where he puts it! He's such a mite of a thing, anyway. His appetite's something appalling.

"Just this mornin' Jed, my hired man, took a brimming pailful of milk and stuff out here and poured it into that trough, and stood here and watched that critter eat up the last mite of it. Jed told me the pig didn't make anything of eating it all up in just a minute or two, and then the critter stood and squealed for more right on top of that.

"Jed wondered, just as I do, where he found room for so much stuff," Mr. Peaslee ruminated, "and he said the pig wasn't a particle bigger after he'd et all that pailful. Just to make himself sure that he wasn't mistaken," Mr. Peaslee went on convincingly, "he grabbed the pig by the hind legs and rammed him down into the pail, and the pig and the milk he'd et, and all, didn't fill the pail only about half full."



Mrs. Dart—I know I'll get stage fright when I address my club tomorrow; I won't be able to say a word.

Dart—Imagine I'm in the audience.

Novel Memory System.

"While walking in the South a little while ago," a pedestrian writes, "I came upon an old negro with a load of hay. He was standing in the road, scratching his head and looking worried—oh, very worried.

"What's the trouble, uncle?" I asked.

"Well, massa, I done got a load of hay for a man and blessed if I can 'member his name.'

"Knowing most of the people around there, I asked: 'What does his name sound like?'

" 'Well,' said uncle, 'it reminds me of Chirstmas, Fourth o' July an' New Year's.'

" 'Oh,' I said, 'you mean "Holiday." '

"Yessah, yessah, that's him!'

"And away he went."

Wedding Accessories.

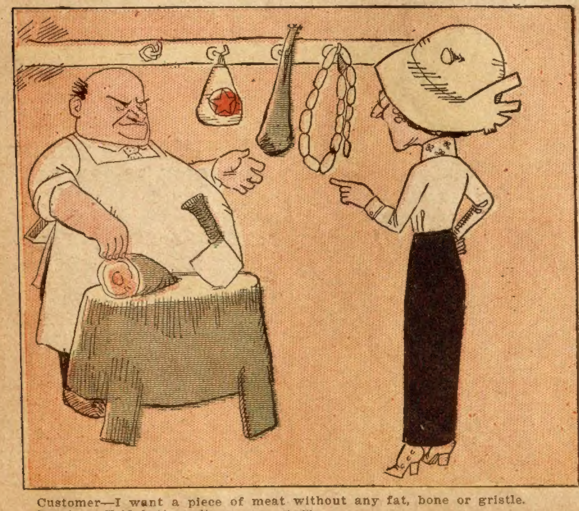
Bacon—I see Louisiana produced more than half the rice grown in the United States last year.

Egbert—And Massachusetts a large majority of the shoes.

A Pressing Engagement.

"Can't you take me for a ride in your new automobile next Thursday?"

"Sorry, old chap, but that's our cook's day for a spin."



Customer—I want a piece of meat without any fat, bone or gristle.

Butcher—Ye'd better git an egg, mum.

Delightful Situation.

Jeremy Sanderson, the sociologist of Duluth, was condemning the international marr'age that gives an American girl's beauty and millions to some withered nobleman.

"Those mercenaries that filch our girls," said Mr. Sanderson, bitterly, "are well off—well off, I mean, in the Calhoun use of the term.

"H. Clay Calhoun, testifying in an assault case, spoke of one Washington White as 'well off!'

" 'Now, witness,' said the cross-examining lawyer, 'when you declare White to be well off, what do you mean? Is he worth $10,000?'

" 'No, sah. O, no, sah,' said Calhoun.

" 'Is he worth $5,000?'

" 'No, sah. Mah gracious, no!'

" 'Is he worth $1,000?'

" 'No, sah; he ain't worth 17 cents.'

" 'Then how is he well off?'

" 'Bekase, sah, his wife am ah No. 1 washlady and keeps de hull family in bang-up style.' "

No Rash Promises.

"Wombat must have made garden before."

"Goes about it in an intelligent manner, does he?"

"Yes; he isn't promising his friends any vegetables."

A Great Improvement.

E. V. Jewell told this one recently:

"I have a very dear old housekeeper—she is aged, but she has been like a mother to me. A little while ago I noticed that my silver shaving mug was slightly tarnished, and I asked the old lady to polish it for me. The next morning I found it shining like the sun. I completed my toilet and then went into the kitchen to thank her for her kindness.

" 'Mrs. Gorman,' I said, my mug looks a lot nicer this morning.'

" 'It surely does, Mr. Jewell,' she replied, glancing up at me. 'You always look a lot better with a clean shave.' "

Not Very Fast.

"It took that racing automobile twenty minutes to pass this house."

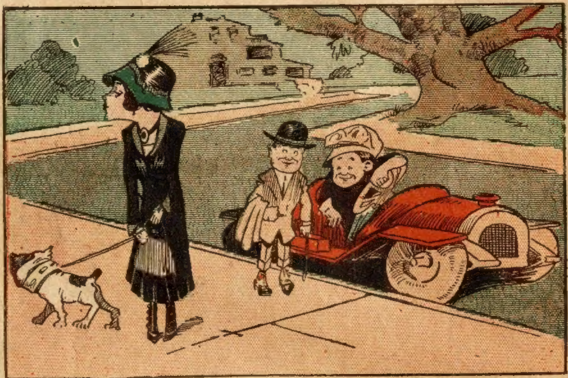
"Impossible."

"Fact. I could hear it ten minutes before it got here, and I could smell it ten minutes after it passed."

A Bad Fit.

"Did you ever try a London tailor, Binks?" asked Witherbee.

"Yes—once, but never again," said Binks. "Why, Bill, I don't believe one of those London tailors could make a coat of paint fit a hen coop."



McSnoop—What does Ethel lug that ugly dog around for? A fellow doesn't dare to go near her, don't ye know.

Sparker—Sh! That's easy. Go up and let the dog bite you and then she'll have to be nice to you. That is unless it kills the dog immediately.

Equal Division of Labor.

There were points of resemblance between Mrs. Hammond and the lilies of the field; she had married a young man who had a good salary, but she herself had never earned a penny in her life, nor had she been blessed with well-to-do parents.

"We have a joint account in the National Fountain Bank," she announced to one of her friends, when she had been married a few months. "It is such fun to pay bills by check."

"What do you mean by a joint account?" asked the incredulous friend. "Do you put in equal sums?"

"Oh, I don't put in any," Mrs. Hammond said. "Will puts it in, and I draw it out."

Up to Date Dutchman.

The flying Dutchman scanned each wave
  And a doleful sigh sighed he.
"This biz of chasing sailors brave
  Is older than the sea.
No more they fear my ghostly light,
  Or square sails fore and aft.
And if I wish to score them right
  I'll have to change my craft.
Soon then the flying Dutchman blew
  His ancient ship in twain,
And high above the sea he flew
  In a modern aeroplane.

Worse Than Horse Races.

Blinkers—Why is it your friend Winkers is always down at the heel? Does he lose his money on horse races?

Dinkers—He never bets on a horse race. He loses more money on the human race.

"Eh?"

"He has nine children."

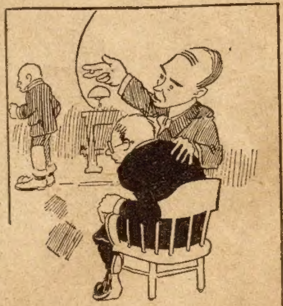
Trials of High Life.

First Guest—Awful bore, isn't it?

Second Guest—Dull as a funeral. I knew it would be.

First Guest—You knew it? Then why did you come?

Second Guest—Had to. My wife heard that the formula for writing regrets had changed, and she couldn't find out what the new style was. So she sent an acceptance.

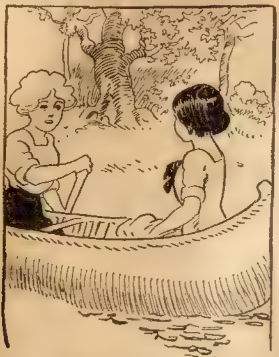


Bilwood—He's the meanest man in town.

Panhard—Go on!

Bilwood—Yes, sir. When I told him I couldn't remember anything any more he wanted to borrow a ten right off.

TACKLES
ELLSWORTH YOUNG



Ella—Pa thinks I'm too young to marry.

Stella—Cheer up, dear; you won't be by the time you get a proposal.

Properly Rebuked.

A traveling man, who was a cigarette smoker, reached town on an early train. He wanted a smoke, but none of the stores were open. Near the station he saw a newsboy smoking, and approached him with:

"Say, son, got another cigarette?"

"No, sir," said the boy, "but I've got makings."

"All right," the traveling man said. "But I can't roll 'em very well. Will you fix one for me?"

The boy did.

"Don't believe I've got a match," said the man after a search through his pockets.

The boy handed him a match. "Say, captain," he said, "you ain't got anything but the habit, have you?"

Wanted to be Sure.

Accompanied by an instructor, the new entry into the automobile field was out, bright and early, in his new touring car They were circling the park in rather a wobbly fashion.

"I suppose," he casually remarked to the chauffeur, as he took a fresh grasp on the speed lever, "that you have been around with worse than I?"

The man gave no answer.

"I say," he repeated in a louder voice, "I suppose you have been around this course with worse than I?"

"I heard very well, sir, what you said in the first place," replied the man "I'm jest a-thinking' about it."

The Last Laugh.

The frequent and unsuccessful candidacy of certain men in Milwaukee for public office reminded George (Scotty) Dore of a story of his old friend Hogan

"Hogan was raffling a clock," said Mr. Dore. "He was fairly successful in disposing of tickets in the shop where he worked, but he ran up against trouble when he canvassed his neighbors.

"Dropping in at a neighbor's house, he tried to sell a ticket on the clock.

"'It's a fine timepiece and it'll luk foine on yer what-not er mantel,' says Hogan, cajolingly.

"'Gwan, the old clock doesn't run,' replied the neighbor.

"'Well,' drawled Hogan, changing front completely, 'well, perhaps yez won't win it and then ye'll have the laugh on the fellow who does.'"

Tight Trousers.

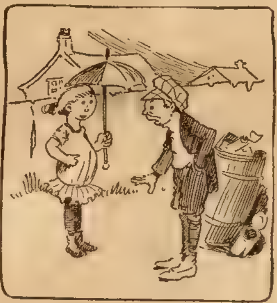
When President Taft was 7 years old his mother bought him a pair of short duck trousers. The first time they were washed they shrank badly. The boy was fat, but his mother wedged him into the trousers against his protest. He went out to play, but in a few minutes returned.

"Mamma," he said, "I can't wear these pants; they are too tight. Why, mamma, they are tighter than my skin"

"Oh, no; they're not, Billy," replied his mother. "Nothing could be tighter than your skin."

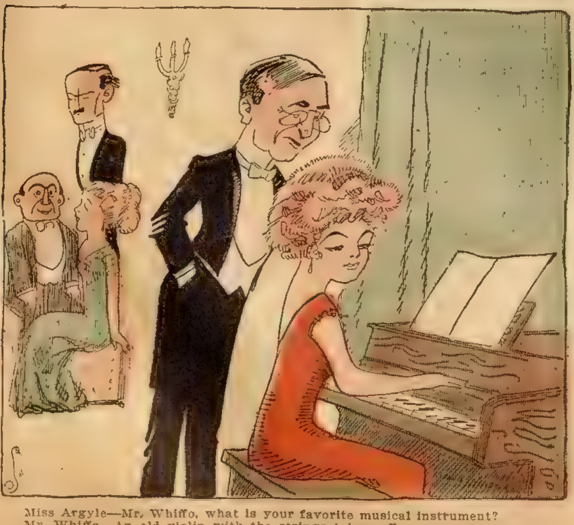
"Well, all the same, these pants are. I can sit down in my skin, but I can't in these pants."

* * *



Tessie Wilkins—Did you ever go with any other girl, Lem?

Lem Dirke—How kin you say that, Tess? Why, no other girl would go with me.



Miss Argyle—Mr. Whiffo, what is your favorite musical instrument?
Mr. Whiffo—An old violin with the strings taken off.

Got Body and Soul.

There was a bashful young man who was invited to a dinner party and was paired with the prettiest woman in the room. His seat at the table was in front of the roast fowl, which he was to carve. And there was also a fried sole in front of him. And he had never done a lick of carving in his life, for he was a bachelor.

But he made the best of the situation by asking the lady at his side what she would have.

"A little of the sole," she replied.

He began to cut off a slice of the chicken's breast.

"No, no— of the sole," she replied.

Now where was the soul of a hen? He thought for a minute, and then attacked the wing.

"The sole, the sole!" cried the lady.

He looked for the feet, but no soles were left, so he tried a drumstick. But she still shook her head, and said: "No, I only want a piece of the sole."

Then did this young man arise in his wrath, stick a fork through the fowl, and put it all on the woman's plate.

"Take it!" he shouted; "take it, body, soul and all!"

Then he helped himself to the fish.

Disgusting Stupidity.

"Do you really and truly think I am beautiful?" she asked.

"You are simply divine," he replied.

"But there are other girls whom you think more beautiful than I."

"No, I don't think there is a more beautiful girl in the world than you.

"I suppose there are plenty of girls whom you consider almost as beautiful as I am."

"I think you are far more beautiful than any other girl that ever breathed."

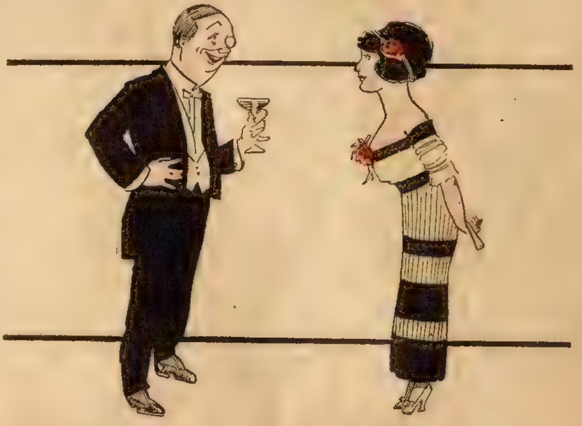
"Well, why didn't you say that in the first place?"

"That was what I meant, if I didn't exactly say so."

"O, well, go on. My goodness! Must I suggest everything nice that you say to me?"

"What more can I say?"

"Heavens! I'm not going to sit here giving you lessons. I thought the way you started out that you had made love before."



"So you also believe in equal rights for the two sexes, do you, doctor?"
"I certainly do—for men would then occasionally have a chance to be heard."

A Knock-Down Blow.

New Boarder (complainingly)—You have had hash on the table five days in succession.

Mrs. Slimdiet (with dignity)—If you would stop in your race for filthy lucre long enough to observe the ways of refined people, and look over the Society Monitor occasionally, you would learn, sir, that table knives have gone out of fashion, and the only stylish dishes now are those which can be eaten with a fork.

Dreaded a Second Trip.

A Philadelphian on his way to Europe was experiencing seasickness for the first time. Calling his wife to his bedside, he said, in a weak voice:

"Jenny, my will is in the Commercial Trust Company's care. Everything is left to you, dear. My various stocks you will find in my safe-deposit box. Then he said fervently: "And, Jenny, bury me on the other side. I can't stand this trip again, alive or dead."

Staving It Off.

The street piano was out our way the other night and our next-door neighbor didn't like it.

"Here's a nickel," he shouted to the grinder, "if you'll go away at once.'

"Ees der someboda wat ees seeck?" asked the grinder.

"Not yet," answered our neighbor—"hurry!"

Returns Came in Early.

Husband—Er—my dear, there is going to be a very important—er—election at my club tonight, and I may——"

Wife—Very well. I'll wait up to hear the returns.

"Um—er—are you interested in the returns?"

"Yes—your returns."

Retrenched Too Soon.

Clara—Why did you break your engagement with George? He used to bring you such delicious candy.

Dora—Yes, used to; but since I accepted him, he's been bringing me the twenty-five cent kind.

The Other Extreme.

"I haven't enough money to startle society with my gowns."

"In that case, why not go in for barefoot dancing?"

Fido's Defender.

"I'm going to take a stick to that miserable beast of yours one of these days, madam."

"I wish you would. Neither his father nor myself can do a thing for him."

"Madam, I am speaking of your dog, not of your little boy."

"What! Take a stick to Fido! You horrid brute, you! Don't you dare!"

A Popular Study.

Uncle Wayback—Now wot's th' use o' teachin' gals all these new fangled studies? Wot good is this here astronomy you're studyin'?

City Niece—Why, uncle, it's a delightful subject to talk about these moonlight evenings. We point to Venus, and then—— See that ring?

Not Afraid.

"A man is a fool to introduce an attractive man to the girl he is engaged to."

"I think so, too. Come over here a minute, I want you to meet my fiancee."

A Profitable Investment.

Beggar (who has just received five cents)—Thank you, sir; Heaven will reward you fifty-fold.

Giver—If I felt sure of that, my friend, I'd give you a dollar.

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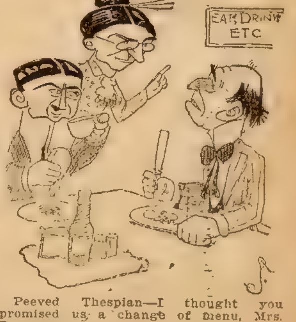

Peeved Thespian—I thought you promised us a change of menu, Mrs. Boardem?

Mrs. Boardem—That starts tomorrow, Mr. Wonite Stanz; we're going to serve the hash in square dishes instead of round ones.

Successful Treatment of Hay-Fever

The demand for Dr. Hayes' book describing the new and successful method of relieving and curing Asthma and Hay-Fever has been so great that a new edition of one hundred thousand has just been put to press and will be ready in a few days. Dr. Hayes is distributing the book free to all sufferers and if you want a copy send a two-cent stamp with name and address at once to P. Harold Hayes, M. D., Buffalo, N. Y., asking for Bulletin U-112. Reports from cases treated the past few years show that the disease does not return.

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Ben Sheldon's Love.

(Continued from page nine.)

She did not blame the scout for the inevitable, but the fact that he had let her go out from under his protection, when it had been for his sake that she first left the camp, and by so doing brought all this trouble about, rankled in her breast in spite of her.

She knew it was not Jack Dutton the Indians wanted; he might have remained behind without extra danger to the emigrants. It was for her sake alone he dared the dangers of forest and plain. And this man who claimed to derive a quarter of his blood from the Indian race—a race savage in its instincts and training—this man suddenly became a hero in her eyes, and all-in-all to her.

Her preference for Ben Sheldon, which had been felt, but not acknowledged, in the early part of their journey—the very thing that had caused her intolerance of Jack's persistent suit, had fallen suddenly from her when the latter proved himself unselfishly devoted to her interests by endeavoring to bring about her union with Ben, in order to save her from the consequences of what he then believed to be her own folly. She knew a man when she saw one, she told Jack, much to his delight, for he felt he had redeemed himself in her eyes, while the heroic efforts of the scout in offering himself for her benefit at the instigation of Jack Dutton, her true lover, but irritated her toward Ben because he had dared to believe she had given him her love unsought.

And now that the old-time preference had fallen from her, and she had learned to appreciate her faithful follower fully, she began to feel a freedom of spirits like unto that experienced by Harold Lane on surrendering his preference for her for the love of a more suitable mate for him—sweet Edith Baldwin. And how free she felt! how exhilarated! as she rode down to the level country, and straight toward the plain, with Jack Dutton by her side.

"Jack!" she said, after they had ridden awhile in silence, and the dusk of evening was gathering round them. "Jack! there may be dangers to face as great as the ones we left behind us; there may be hardships and privations. But we are together, and—Jack! I never was so happy in all my life, and so unafraid!"

He looked at her with shining eyes. He understood, and his heart was too full for speech. He reached out his hand in silent gratitude, and hand in hand they rode on amid the shadows of the fast-falling night.

Meanwhile, back at the camp they had left Ben Sheldon stood and watched them till they disappeared down the trail among the stunted timber at the base of the mountain. He was worried about them in his heart. They would be safe from the impending onslaught of Wind-that-Blows and his tribe, but other and as great dangers might await them on their journey. He tried to feel gratified because of their escape from the search that was sure to be made for them with a view to Myrtle's recapture. But though he had no regrets for the course he had taken, it grieved him that he was obliged to put any of his party beyond his power to protect them—leaving them to encounter the perils of the journey alone, albeit they went in all cheerfulness of spirit.

The turn affairs had taken left Ben Sheldon depressed and with very little courage to meet the events of the coming night.

Nekoosa, it will be remembered, had brought the two delinquents into camp. At first she had attracted considerable attention from the younger members of the party. And the women, anxious to conciliate one who might have influence with the redskins, feasted her on the best the camp afforded, and fixed her a couch in a secluded spot where she might rest. From her they gathered that her tribe had gone over the mountainside to take the tribe of Wind-that-Blows by surprise and bring back the scalps of every warrior among them

It was horrible to think of, the women told one another, but there was an unspoken hope among them, nevertheless—a hope in every heart that Nekoosa's people would do sufficient damage to the tribe of Wind-that-Blows to prevent the attack on the wagons that night.

The men also talked the matter over with hope renewed. These savages had not seemed to be on the warpath, but they were bent on retaliation, as Nekoosa knew. They had made their intentions known to her. But unless they arrived at the village before the war-dance was over, the halfbreed chief would be on his way around the mountain, and would arrive at the camp in time to annihilate the movers before their trail could be followed to this place. All would be over with them, and Myrtle and Jack the only ones to escape from the massacre.

"I did quite right in sending them," Ben reiterated to his conscience, and to appease his apprehensions; but the responsibilities of his calling rested heavily upon him, and the premonition of overshadowing events clouded his brow.

Just as the dusk began to deepen, and the scout was thinking that the two outcasts (for such his conscience termed them) must be free of the timber and out on the treeless plain, he turned at a soft touch on his arm and beheld Nekoosa at his side.

"Is the chief of the palefaces cast down because of the two lone ones who are gone? Does the great chief fear they will come to harm?"

"You have guessed it, oh princess," Ben replied. "I am afraid for them. But there was no other way. Wind-that-Blows will come for Star-of-the-Night before the sun rises. If he had found her here he would have taken her and massacred the rest."

"The scalp of Wind-that-Blows will hang at the belt of one of Night-Hawk's warriors before he has time to reach this place," boasted the girl.

Ben nearly said, "God grant it!" not the sort of prayer he ought to make, he was well aware. And though he remembered himself in time to suppress the ejaculation, he would have been guiltless had the words been uttered; for he merely meant to wish for something to happen to change the tide of impending doom for the emigrants; and other things besides the chief's death might accomplish their redemption

And the scout began from that thought to plan another way to save them. If he sought an audience with the chief, Wind-that-Blows, and gave him permission to search the camp and learn that his late captive was not there, he might be able to hold him to the treaty, and the rest be allowed to go on in peace. But the emigrants would not be willing for him to leave them that he might gain speech with the chief; and he might not have time to enter into a parley under a flag of truce, for now that the Indians had gone on the warpath in the regulation manner, it was likely they would plan a surprise, and swoop down upon the camp without warning, overrunning it and overpowering the defense. He would be given no time to address the chief, and the white flag would be disregarded, even if seen in the darkness.

No, he concluded, there was no chance—no chance for them at all.

The suspense while awaiting was terrible to the emigrants, and to Ben, the Scout, especially, for the greater part of the responsibility rested on his shoulders. But they all knew the most terrible moment was yet to come—when the warwhoop they were listening for should sound suddenly upon the ears strained to catch it.

But what really happened that night was something unforseen and undreamed of—something soul-harrowing, and as strange as it was terrible!

CHAPTER XV.

NEKOOSA LEAVES CAMP.

Ben, the Scout, had forgotten the Indian girl's presence, so deeply was he absorbed by the problem that confronted him. But to draw his attention she spoke again.

"Nekoosa would ride after the palefaces and save them, if she had a pony."

Ben turned and looked keenly at the Indian princess. He had not thought of there being danger to her before. She was Indian, but now he remembered that his enemies were her enemies, and as she was Night-Hawk's daughter she would be recaptured when the wagons were attacked.

"Girl," he said, "you saved my life. I will pay the debt. I had forgotten that your foes and mine are the same, and that you are in as much danger here as any of us. Come! My saddle horse is yours to keep for all time. You shall have ammunition and food, and shall go to your own home on the other side of the mountain.

"I will lead you outside, then you must away to your wigwams. Night-Hawk, the great chief, must not mourn his daughter, her people must not miss their princess when they return victorious and rejoicing from the fight."

He spoke as if their victory was assured, for he saw the Indian girl believed it. As for him, he never for a moment doubted that the warriors of the village by the cave would have left there before those of Nekoosa's tribe arrived. The latter would stop to murder the squaws and papooses before following after them, most likely. Or, await their return from the slaughter of the emigrants, and then the victory would be easier; for the warriors of Wind-that-Blows would be wearied with the fight and the journey around the mountain point. They would be taken by surprise, and found unprepared.

Yes, he figured, Nekoosa's people, as she called them, would win in the end. But before they even met the princess herself would be caught like a rat in a trap in the camp of the palefaces by the enemies of her tribe, the very ones she had escaped from when she hid in the cave where he had found her. He must prevent that at all hazards. He would never need his saddle horse again, it would only fall into the hands of the redskins after the fight—no, the massacre—was over. The men would fight, of course, but the battle would be short and decisive.

"Nekoosa not afraid," said the girl as she followed him to where his horse was tethered. "She will bring the pony back; but she will hide the two palefaces till the wagon-train come on. She will return and tell the white chief where they are hidden."

"Child!" he exclaimed, "you may be sincere, but you know little of the condition of things if you think the wagon-train will ever go on. Promise me, that when you return and find no living soul to tell the story of this night, you will go back and send the palefaces on. Promise!"

"I will go back, oh, chief of the palefaces, and lead the white brave and his squaw to the settlement. My people shall see that their journey is safe from all danger. I am their princess, they will obey me. The white chief took me from the cavern. I was lonely. But I dared not go across the mountain alone, for my enemies were thick in the forest Yes, Nekoosa will do all the pale chief wishes."

"Then God speed you!" cried Ben. And the Indian princess rode out in the direction Myrtle and Jack had taken.

Now it happened that the braves of Night-Hawk were met on the mountain by one of their scouts. Their chief also had joined them, and a council of war was held there on the wooded mountain slope, the chief seated calmly on a fallen tree. His scores of braves were squatted around him, hanging eagerly upon the words of the runner who had lately spied upon the village of tepees.

"There were only squaws and papooses and a few old men at the wigwams," he explained, using of course the Indian language. "But there were the remains of a feast, and the scalp-pole still stood in its place. The dogs of red men have lately gone on the warpath; they are not at their camp grounds."

"Then we will wait," Night-Hawk said. "We have come far, and we will not return till we have avenged the fate of the Fawn—the princess, who was the light of your chief's lodge. There shall not be a brave left of the tribe of our enemies. Nekoosa shall be avenged! Night-Hawk has spoken!"

The old chief folded his arms, as he ceased speaking, and reseated himself on the log. After a minute's impressive silence a brave arose slowly from his haunches and spoke:

"Oh, Night-Hawk, who is great, who strikes and spares not his enemies! Hear what Swift-Foot has to say: Nekoosa, the Fawn—the darling of the great chief's heart, is safe. She lives and is

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free. She has escaped from her foes, for this day we have seen her in the camp of the palefaces, who are her friends, and the foes of our enemies. These, my brethren, have also seen her. Is it not so?"

He looked around on the men who had followed their chief to wipe out the insult perpetrated, when a descent on their village was made, a short time before, at a time when the Indians were unprepared for war, and a number of their braves killed, and the princess taken captive.

The Indians who were squatted around the old chief grunted assent.

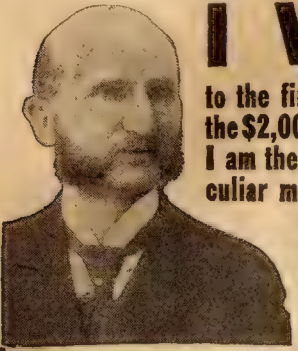
The chief was overcome by the news. He wiped his eyes, but still retained his dignified mien, as he made reply:

"It is well," he said. "It brings joy to the heart of Night-Hawk, whose last days will not be spent in sorrow."

(Continued on page eighteen.)

I WILL PAY $2,000

to the first person proving these letters are not absolutely genuine. I have deposited the $2,000.00 in the MERCHANTS STATE BANK of Wichita, Kansas, for that purpose. I am the originator and only living man in the world practicing my strange and peculiar method of healing. I have thousands of patients in the United States---patients in every State in the Union, and many foreign countries. Read their letters and form your own opinion. --*PROF. SAMUELS.*



PROF. SAMUELS,
Scientist and Originator of Samuel's Systematic Treatment.

LUNG TROUBLE.

Newton, Kas., March 12, 1910.

I feel it is my duty to tell you what wonderful good Prof. Samuels' treatment has done for me. I had suffered with lung trouble for eight years, and had hemorrhages almost every day. I took the treatment faithfully for one year, and gave it a thorough trial, and have never had a hemorrhage since taking it. I began to gain after the first month, and am now in better health than for years. Any help or reference I can give to those wishing to know of this strange treatment I will gladly give. Yours faithfully,
MRS. C. C. McDANIEL.
662½ Main Street.

NEURALGIA AND STOMACH TROUBLE.

Oswego, Kas., October 24, 1909.

Prof. Samuels.

Dear Sir:—I received your letter quite a few days ago, but have put off answering it. I certainly am very thankful to you for the good and great benefit I have derived from the use of the treatment prescribed by you.

What I suffered before I wrote you in regard to your method of treatment is beyond me to describe. The comfort I have now in living and being able to go about and enjoy my food and drink as others do, is simply wonderful.

I lost 16 pounds of flesh from early spring until after I had taken your treatment probably about a little over three weeks; then I commenced to gain, and now have regained 8 pounds of the 16. On the whole, I consider myself as wonderfully blessed and extend to you my sincere thanks. Very gratefully and respectfully,
MRS. C. E. COLEMAN.
Oswego, Kas., Box 403.

DEAFNESS.

Baynesville, Kas., July 19, 1909.

Prof. Samuels.

Dear Sir:—Will write you about my child. She is getting along fine. She seems to hear as good as she ever did, but she is still using the medicine for a complete cure. How much longer do you think she will need to use the medicine? She hears all right now, but if you think she should still use the medicine please send the same, as you have been. Yours respectfully,
W. H. SCHULTE.

PARALYSIS AND GENERAL TROUBLE.

Opelousas, La., June 21, 1910.

Prof. H. Samuels.

Dear Sir:—I have received and began taking your treatment on the 9th inst., and I am proud to say that I received beneficial results in twenty-four hours after the first dose. My eyesight has improved a hundred per cent; my pains in all my limbs have been greatly relieved. In fact, all my ills are relieved; I feel altogether much better.

I desire to thank you heartily for the relief you have procured me; and hope and trust it will continue for the better, until a permanent cure is effected.

You will find enclosed names of persons affected with chronic diseases. I have also given your name and address to several other parties, whom you must have heard from by this time

Thanking you again, I am, Yours gratefully,
(Signed) D. F. DUPRE.
Opelousas, La. R. No. 2.

STOMACH.

Chicago, Ill., Sept. 22, 1910.

Prof. Samuels.

Dear Sir:—Have now been using last month's treatment. I am feeling fine, so I do not think I need use any more medicine just now. My stomach trouble, as well as other ailments, are all gone, so I am at present enjoying the best of health.

My heartiest thanks to you for your wonderful medicine. Respectfully yours,
(Signed) CHARLES PETERSON.
No. 5414 Fifth Ave., Chicago, Ill.

KIDNEYS.

Chelan, Wash., Sept. 19, 1910.

Prof. Samuels.

Dear Sir:—I have been away from home for some time, and, as the letter was not sent to me, I did not receive it until a short time ago. I am very sorry, and had I been at home you would have heard from me sooner.

I am entirely cured, and do not need any more of your treatments.

Thanking you very much for your kindness, and wishing you success, believe me, I am, Yours very truly,
(Signed) MRS. D. L. CLEMER.

CATARRH OF STOMACH.

Shamrock, Tex., March 23, 1910.

Prof. H. Samuels:—Enclosed find money for a month's treatment, which I think will be all I will need, as I am as well as I ever was and in one more month I think I will be cured. I am, Yours truly,
(Signed) MRS. T. H. SPOON.

BLIND AND DEAF.

Llamo, Tex., May 18, 1910.

Dear Sir:—I think my husband, Mr. Kuffman, is improving fast, as he can now see out of his blind eye, and his hearing is improved. You will find inclosed money for another month's treatment. You will please send it in my name, Mrs. E. P. Kuffman, and oblige.
(Signed) MRS. E. P. KUFFMAN.

LIVER AND STOMACH TROUBLE.

Monett, Mo., Oct. 31, 1910.

Prof. H. Samuels.

Dear Friend:—Four weeks ago yesterday I received your medicine, and commenced treatment by directions, and have found myself benefited very much, and I have one-half bottle yet. I will not need any more at present, as I will wait a few days and see if it is going to hold my health good. If not, will send for more, as it is surely the finest treatment that the human family has ever taken. Respectfully yours,
(Signed) JOHN B. WITHERS.

KIDNEY AND STOMACH TROUBLE.

Bruce, S. D., Oct. 23, 1910.

Prof. Samuels.

Dear Sir:—I received your letter quite a few days ago, but have put off answering it.

I certainly am very thankful to you for the good and great benefit I have derived from the use of the treatment prescribed by you. What I suffered before I commenced to take your method of treatment is beyond me to describe. The comfort I have now in living and being able to go about and enjoy my food and drink as others do is simply wonderful. I extend to you my sincere thanks. Very gratefully and respectfully,
MRS. WILLAN HOFFMAN.
Bruce, S. Dak., R. No. 2.

EYE AND GENERAL TROUBLE.

Willmarth, Fla., Sept. 16, 1910.

Prof. H. Samuels:—I can't fully explain to you how much good your treatment has done me.

I am doing well now, and not in a position to take treatment longer, although I expected to take treatment three months if I could have done it. I am willing to tell anyone that if they take the treatment according to directions it will do all you claim for it.
BETTY GRANT.

GAINS RAPIDLY.

Jacksonville, Ill., Oct. 10, 1910.

Prof. H. Samuels.

Dear Sir:—Received treatment all O. K. Am still gaining in weight. Have gained 40 pounds since taking your treatment, and feel better than I have for over two years. Sincerely yours,
MRS. R. M. FULLER.

ASTHMA.

Augusta, Kas., Nov. 7, 1909.

Prof. Samuels.

Dear Sir:—Some time last December we brought to you our son, Dandridge Lyon, who was then and had been for some time suffering from a severe case of asthma After your first treatment he had one slight attack. Your medicine soon relieved him, and since then he has never been troubled with asthma.

He looks much better, and now feels that he is entirely cured. It was the best investment that I ever made. Yours very truly,
W. W. LYON AND WIFE.

BRIGHT'S DISEASE.

Remus, Mich., Sept. 25, 1910.

Prof. H. Samuels.

Dear Sir:—I wish to write you these few lines today for the express purpose of thanking you for your very successful treatment of my wife's sickness, namely Bright's disease. We consider her entirely cured of this dread malady, and can say to any person or persons desiring to benefit themselves in anything of this kind, they would do well to consult you; and we are ready and willing at any time to testify to your ability to do what you claim to do.

So with heartfelt thanks for the great good you have done, I will close by writing myself, Your obedient servant,
(Signed) P. F. BRADLEY.
Remus, Mich., R. No. 4, Box 63.

FROM A PHYSICIAN.

Kildare, Okla., March 2, 1909.

Prof. Samuels.

Dear Sir:—I find your miraculous remedy already helping my nerves. Who shall deny that in not many years to come you shall be regarded as the pioneer of a new and better system of therapeutics, in which the eye, rather than the mouth, shall be regarded as the proper entrance to the internal economy of suffering humanity? When that day arrives those who now cast stones at you will replace those stones with garlands, and will truculently declare: "We always knew he was right." You will, I hope, then remember that one of the first to see the depth and wisdom of your theory was, Yours very gratefully,
VERE V. HUNT, LL.D., M. D.
Formerly Division Surgeon for the Frisco Ry., Kildare, Okla.

TUBERCULOSIS AND TEREGIUM.

Maryville, Mo., June 10, 1910.

Dear Sir:—Find enclosed money, for which please send me another month's treatment of your wonderful remedy, for I certainly think it a godsend to suffering humanity. I have gained fifteen pounds in two months, and feel better than I have for two years. The teregium on my eye is disappearing, and I can read large print, such as the headlines of a paper, after being practically blind in it for five years. Yours truly,
L. M. HELMS.
Maryville, Mo., Route 3, Box 44.

EYE TROUBLE.

Waynoka, Okla.

Prof. Samuels.

Dear Sir:—I am glad to tell you that my eyes are as good as they ever were, and as I do not need your medicine any more you do not need to send it. Hoping you may help others as you have helped me, I remain,
LUCIE ULMER.

STOMACH AND KIDNEY TROUBLE.

Smallet, Mo., March 3, 1910.

Prof. H. Samuels.

Kind Sir:—I received your letter a few days ago, in which you ask how I was progressing. I wish to say that I am at present feeling fine in every way, and have been improving in health wonderfully since taking the treatment, of which I commenced on the 3rd of March and just before taking your eye treatment I assure you I was a miserable wreck. Could hardly stir about. Of course I am not entirely well, but at present I feel better than I ever did in my whole life. I could really write several pages in describing my improvement, but I assure you will make a full report at the time I am cured, and will let you know more of my improvement in about two or three weeks. Very truly yours,
PERRY A. McGUIRE.
Smallet, Mo.

ASTHMA.

Burlington Jct., Mo., Oct. 10, 1910.

Prof. H. Samuels.

Dear Sir:—I have been an invalid for twenty-eight years with Asthma or some trouble similar, wherein my breathing was affected. I have tried every remedy known to the M. D.'s, but failed to get only temporary relief from them.

I began treatment with you the latter part of March, and I believe I am cured by your treatment in the last seven months. Respectfully, (Signed) MRS. S. A. SHIEL.
Burlington Junction, Mo.

DEAFNESS CURED.

Connorsville, Ind., Feb. 2, 1911.

Prof. Samuels.

Dear Sir:—From neglect I have not written you, which should have been done some weeks ago, to let you know after waiting so long since having taken the treatment for my failing eyesight, wish to say I can hear as well as I ever did, and the pain in my head is all gone; also the buzzing noise. I can see fine. Of course, I have to use glasses to read or work in, but do not need them for anything else.

Too much cannot be said in favor of your wonderful cure. I heartily recommend you and your treatment to any and all who are afflicted as I have been. Think: I am a man seventy-seven years old, and am very well, indeed. May God continue to bless your way of treating diseases through the eye, is the wish of one who cannot say enough for it. Very truly your friend,
(Signed) ISAAC HAPNER.
No. 213 W. 19th St., Connorsville, Ind.
(General. Two months.)

SERIOUS STOMACH TROUBLE.

Carrollton, Tex., May 27, 1910.

Prof. H. Samuels.

Dear Sir:—I am more than pleased to inform you that I am getting along just fine. I don't suffer but very little, and have got so I can sleep very well. I am well pleased with the medicine, and as I am nearly out of medicine please send me some at once, for I don't want to get without, and oblige. Your friend,
(Signed) C. A. SMITH.

HEALTH RESTORED.

Pilot Butte, July 6, 1910.

Prof. H. Samuels.

Dear Sir:—I guess you will think I have forgotten you, but that will never be. I will never forget the man that saved my life.

Well, I suppose you will be glad when you hear how I am keeping. I am feeling pretty good. Last year at this time I wasn't able to feed myself, and now I can shoulder one hundred and sixty pounds. I think that is pretty good, and I weigh as much as ever I did.

People are surprised to see me look so well.

The crops look fine here. The wheat is is all headed out—though we have had some bad storms here; the wind today blowed my drive shed away and broke my buggy. There has been lots of damage done all around us, but it has no hurt the crop yet. Good bye for this time, from JACOB BITTERIDGE,
Pilot Butte, Sask., Canada.

MY METHOD OF TREATMENT

The method of treatment which I have originated is a strange and peculiar method, differing from anything else used by any living man in the treatment of diseases. I do not use drastic drugs and medicines that doctors depend upon.

Men who are familiar with the chemistry of the human body understand that only the chemical elements used in the creation of the body are required to restore it to health when once its functional power becomes impaired. Nature does not require a mass of drugs dumped into the stomach, which merely represent an accumulation of foreign substances which must eventually be eliminated from the system. When Mother Nature created mankind she used no mercury, no strychnine, no quinine, no digitalis, no morphine or other poisonous chemicals such as the doctors delight to prescribe for you, and she needs none of them to accomplish any restorative work that may be necessary in your behalf.

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ON HIS METTLE:

Or, The Adventures of Ralph Overton

By J. M. MERRILL

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CHAPTER I.

WAS IT AN ACCIDENT?

RALPH Overton staggered as he walked. The boy had been ailing for several days, brought about by the excess of work put upon him by the foreman of the timber-cutters.

"I feel awful sick," moaned the lad as he passed down the incline toward the creek. The narrow foot-bridge that spanned Roaring Run seemed a very shaky affair as our hero approached and greedily took in the rude backwoods scene.

There were rocks, trees and bushes, steep banks, cut into at their foot by a roaring, frothing stream which at times assumed the volume of a river.

"I can't stand this much longer," sighed the lad, whose pale, thin face and hollow eyes bespoke a serious bodily decline.

The boy hesitated at one end of the foot-bridge. Honest Leopold Harks had warned him against tempting the passage, but Ralph Overton was in an almost desperate mood. Kicked out of service by Gil Gragdon, the cutter foreman, he knew not which way to turn for relief.

Ralph was absolutely alone in the world, in fact had graduated from the county poorhouse to the timber-cutters' shanty.

"I must cross the bridge," argued the boy to himself. "I never wish to look on the face of that awful man again. He could not have treated me worse if I had been a dog. Why did he do it? I can't see, when I tried so hard to please him. Ah, Gilbert Gragdon, there'll come a reckoning for this!"

In the lad's heart was a bitterness of feeling that continued to rankle long after the object of his dislike was out of his sight.

Ralph walked unsteadily forward. He gained the center of the structure when a low cry of distress came from his lips—the boards tottered and swayed sidewise, twenty feet above the roaring rapids.

Another moment then came a crunching crash. Far down between the clay banks there splashed the ruins of a bridge, [illegible] its frightened human freight.

The boy, oh where was he?

A man came from a nearby clump of alders and glared down into the boiling stream below. Bits of broken timber were upflung as the ruined bridge whirled through the narrow gorge into more silent waters below.

It was all over, the forest tragedy, and the snake-like eyes of the beholder snapped their wicked approval.

"It is over, easily done!" chuckled the gazer, a wicked smile parting his heavy lips. "When Richard Villaindon calls again at the shanty he shall not be disappointed.

A second man came into view and joined the boss on the edge of the run.

"Ha," ejaculated the last comer, "so the bridge is gone."

"It seems so," admitted the other.

"What happened to it, Gil?"

"Can't say; been growing weaker every day; an old ruin anyhow. Like us humans, its time had come, so down it went."

Leopold Harks regarded the speaker with keen interest. There was a suspicion in his heart that all was not right.

"The boy," he began, only to be interrupted by a sharp growl from his superior.

"Don't mention him," with an angry snarl. "He was an utter good-for-nothing. I hope he has gone for good."

"You discharged the poor lad?"

"Yes, I sent him kiting. We haven't any use for weak whiners in our camp. We want workers instead."

"But the boy was sick——"

"Bah. He had no right to be sick; we don't run a hospital. I stood his whines long enough——"

"But," protested the more humane Harks, "you had no right to turn a sick boy adrift. You paid him, of course——"

"Pay him," with a snarl and up-toss of his red shag of a head. "Well, I should say not. I don't allow anybody to dictate to me, you understand, Harks?"

"No. Well, if you turned that poor boy adrift without a cent, he sick and fit to take to his bed, you are a brute."

Leopold Harks stood back and faced the burly foreman of Hardridge Camp, his honest face aglow with just indignation. There had never been any love lost between these two men. Gragdon hated everything good as the wicked one hates holy water. There had been a [illegible] antagonism between the two men ever since the new foreman stepped foot into Hardridge Camp, now something like half a year.

A black frown mantled the brow of the foreman.

"This is not your time to speak, Harks," he growled threateningly.

"It is my time to speak and to protest," sent back Harks, defying the boss to his face. "I have noticed how you put upon that boy ever since he came. It is a crying shame. I am minded to take notice and shall speak to Mr. Villaindon unless you recall the lad and send for a doctor!"

The compressed lips and flashing eyes of the timberman were expressive of even more than his tongue uttered. The timber boss was annoyed and yet he did not resent the impudence of his underling, for which there was good reason. Harks was very popular with the men at Hardridge Camp. He had been longer in the work than had "Reddy" the new boss. Fact was, an undercurrent of discontent ran deep among the men when this rough rider of woodmen was put over them in place of honest Leopold Harks, who, the men believed, was entitled to the position.

"Recall the lad!" with a snort. "Well, that is good. When I recall him you will hear about it all right. As for you, Leopold Harks, the less you nose around into my business the better it will be for you—understand?"

Doubtless the other did understand, although he gave no assent, but turned and approached nearer to the edge of the gulch. He paused at a spot where a portion of the foot-bridge still held to the bank. The break was not quite what an accidental one would be, it seemed to Harks, who crouched down and began a close inspection of the broken ends of the slender stringers. When he looked up, it was into the eyes of the Hardridge boss, who had approached and was watching every movement of the other.

"Cut!" said the kneeling man.

"Cut—how?"

"Sawed!" articulated Harks. He sprang up and laid a hand on the foreman's arm, transfixing him with his deep blue eyes. "You—you traitor!"

For several seconds the two men continued to gaze, each into the face of the other. Gil flung off the offender's hand, taking a backward step.

"Did—did the boy come this way?" he asked stammeringly.

"He did," accentuated Harks, still piercing the other with his steel-blue gaze. "The bridge has fallen—he is dead, and you, Gil Gragdon, are his murderer!"

"Stuff and nonsense!" ejaculated the foreman, recovering his self-command.

"Instead, it is a most serious affair. I am afraid the boy is at the bottom of Roaring Run."

"Mercy, I hope not."

"Who did that trick?"

Harks pointed at the ends of the sawed stringers.

"Some vicious scamp no doubt," granted the foreman, now quite calm.

"A villain, a murderer!" flashed the honest hewer indignantly.

"All of which may be true."

"We must search——"

"Yes, we will search," agreed the foreman, unbending a little. "I should hate to think Overton met with an accident so soon after quitting my employ."

The two men went down the creek, seeking to find if there had been a catastrophe of a startling nature. They searched long and well without results. There was little wonder that this was so. The rapid current of the Run had swept everything before it miles down the gulch stream.

A malignant, satisfied glow filled the eyes of Gragdon when at length he and his underling stood once more upon the high ground overlooking the spot where the foot-bridge had crossed the cut.

One was satisfied, the other was not.

"There has been foul play," vowed Leopold Harks, his blue orbs shining.

"You have no reason to think so," returned his companion. "Boys are not so easily disposed of; depend upon it Ralph Overton will turn up when least expected, and he'll make us more trouble, like enough."

"Trouble?"

The steel blue eyes pierced to the soul of the speaker.

"Well, yes, he was a troublesome sort, you know," explained Gragdon, biting his thumb as though it pained him. "I think—"

"You think—what?" as the foreman came to a hesitating halt.

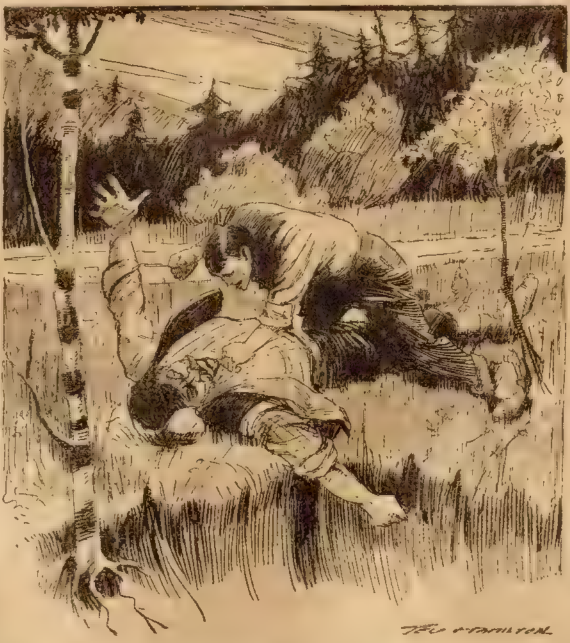
"I think we are well rid of a bad boy. He was constantly in trouble with some of the men. It was a foolish idea taking the fellow in in the first place. He was nothing but a poor-house brat anyhow. Let him go back there, it's the place for all such truck."

"You are uncharitable, Gragdon."

"I do not mean to be."

The foreman started to walk away. His companion did not detain him, but turned his steps aside from the swift-rushing waters of the Run, following a narrow path that led to a wagon trail which climbed the long hill, entering the timber camp not far from where the narrow foot-bridge had been.

A light open buggy was toiling up the incline as honest Leopold Harks entered



Sank weakly to the ground.

the road. The man at once recognized the blacks as usually driven by the timber owner, Richard Villaindon.

"I am glad you are coming back," muttered the man. "I mean to tell you something that'll open your eyes."

"Ha, my good Leopold!" ejaculated the timber owner as he saw his man at the roadside. He moved to make room for the sturdy hewer, after which the rig went forward again, up the incline.

"Everything is all right save and excepting that poor lad we took into camp a few weeks ago," answered Harks in answer to queries from the timber man. "He has been driven out of camp."

"Driven out, Harks?"

"That is an exact statement, Mr. Villaindon."

"But it seems to me strange that the lad should be driven out," spoke the elderly timberman, with great deliberation. "I thought from the one sight I got of him when I was here last week that he was a likely appearing little chap, who would fill the bill very nicely."

"He was all that, sir, and more," declared Harks; "but that foreman of yours declared war on the boy and only this day kicked him out of camp."

"Kicked him out of camp!" in a shocked voice. "Why, Harks, you positively shock me; really I cannot credit what you tell me."

"And that isn't all," proceeded the sturdy hewer; "the lad has been foully dealt with—I am afraid he is dead, sir."

Leopold Harks went on to tell of the tragedy at Roaring Run, of his suspicions of foul play, and of the foreman's part in it all.

The face of Richard Villaindon was very grave at the conclusion of his man's story.

"There can be no motive, of course, for such a crime against a feeble, homeless child," said at length the timber owner. "Nevertheless I know how you feel about this, my good Leopold, and I assure you it shall be looked into. Gilbert comes to me very highly recommended; I cannot think ill of him without ample evidence [illegible]. We shall see, we shall see."

CHAPTER II.

THE CROSS OF ST. GLEBE.

With the crash of the bridge and the plunge into the whirling waters of Roaring Run Ralph Overton lost consciousness. A stunning blow on the temple had rendered him unconscious.

"Wake up here, wake up boy!"

Such was the first greeting that touched the brain of the half-drowned boy as he opened his eyes to find himself rolled about over a hillock by strong hands, while a round, rubicund face peered down at him with the blinkless eyes of an owl.

"See here you! Wake, wake I tell you! Can't have anybody sleeping in my corn patch and that's flat. D'ye hear me, you young skeezix?"

The strong hands continued to roll and drag slender Ralph about the ground.

Ralph did wake finally, and sat up groaning.

"There, there, none o' that; I won't allow it."

A round red face shone from under a straw sombrero. Two very big gray eyes danced with mischief even under these serious conditions—a half-drowned boy doing his best to catch his breath of life-giving air.

"You're all right now, thank goodness," assured the stranger. "I found you pitching about in the river like a deadhead log. Thought it was a dead chap at first. How do you feel?"

"Oh," groaned Ralph, spitting water.

"Most dead, eh? How'd it happen?"

The speaker, a round, full-fronted youth of perhaps sixteen, squatted on the ground in front of his find and grinned. Not very sympathetic, thought the other.

"Bridge broke down," gasped Ralph.

"Well-a-day! You don't tell me. You don't look hefty enough for all that. Some mighty hefty men have crossed that foot-bridge without fazing it. Now, you won't weigh more'n a pint of sweet cider—and you tell me you broke the bridge!"

"I don't know how it came to break, but—but—"

"Never you mind," broke in the fat boy, when he saw that the speaker was gasping from very weakness. "You needn't talk till you get over your spell. My, but you're a perfect sissy! Where'd you come from, anyhow? Stranger in these parts I reckon?"

"Yes," said Ralph, "I am—that is, I haven't been here long. I worked at the Villaindon timber camp."

"Oh, ho!"

The roly-poly youth puckered his lips and whistled. His big round eyes were dancing. He pulled off his hat and wafted it to and fro before his red, hot face.

"Old Villaindon, eh?" he finally chuckled.

"I don't think he is very old," said Ralph.

"No, only old in sin, and as villainous as his name," chortled Fatty. "What's your name, bub?"

"Ralph Overton."

"Good name; mine's Tugwell, Peg Tugwell. Ever hear of that chap?"

Slowly the unfortunate shook his head.

"There's no flies on the name; I'd smash a feller in a minute that would say anything ill of it, or of me and Jill."

"Who's Jill?"

Our young hero was fast gaining his senses, ready to study the situation and map out a course of procedure. His life on the poor-farm had been a most unpleasant one; his short few weeks in the woods had not, however, given him reassurance where the world at large was concerned. The bad usage he had experienced from the Hardridge foreman had not warmed the cockles of his boyish heart toward mankind in general. Therefore he distrusted this boy who seemed so incongruous to his surroundings.

"Jill's Jill, the handsomest, smartest, cutest girl in Christendom. When you see her you'll say so yourself," chuckled Fatty, springing up, executing a handspring, going at a second leap clear over the wet and draggled Ralph.

He came back later, lifted our lonely lad to his feet, and hurried him about the ground in a sharp little run.

"To start the circulation," explained Fatty.

After this Ralph was made to walk beside his rescuer, along the bank of the Run, down into the lower lands, where a wide, flat, grassy strip of ground spread away in undulating swells to the far distance. "The Grass Flats," said Peg by way of diversion. He kept up a running melange of small talk till they were well away from the vicinity of the highland through which the waters of Roaring Run plunged in mad whirl, to the lowlands below.

"A little cottage among the trees, you see it, don't you, Ralph, my boy?"

"Yes," admitted our hero, "I see a little hut by the river side."

"Hut nothing!" sniffed the fat boy, with a toss of his head. "That's the cottage home of your obedient servant and of Jill. You'll meet her soon and be ready to exclaim, 'What beauty! What grace!'"

Even as he gave utterance to the words a girl flitted into the sunshine and came toward them.

"This way, Jill," called the fat boy.

With a smile and extended hand a very pretty, sandy-haired girl of perhaps fourteen, approached. Ralph tried to smile as he accepted her hand.

"I am very glad to meet you, Miss Tugwell," said he.

"And I am pleased to meet my brother's friend," returned the girl.

Ralph's plight was soon told. With words of gentle sympathy the girl led the way inside a most comfortable house. Ralph was treated as a friend of long standing. Seemingly the girl could not do enough for him.

Peg saw that his find was bathed, given stimulating teas, and last but not least togged out in one of the fat boy's suits of clothes. Ralph fitted the garments about as snuggly as a bean pole in a post hole, yet these were clean and dry, which made our boy hero very thankful.

The day passed, night came down, lights were lit and the little party of three drew themselves about the open wood fire in the little livingroom to enjoy the warmth and good cheer afforded by their surroundings.

Ralph had never felt so comfortable. He wished that this might always be his haven of rest. Of a sudden a thought flashed through his brain. The three had supped and they were in very cheer-

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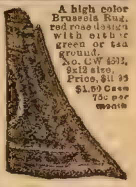

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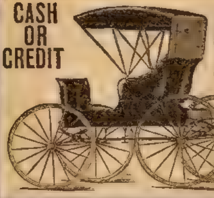

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ful mood. Peg brought out a fiddle and thrummed the strings.

Ralph ran his hand into the bosom of his shirt, then grew quite white.

"My, I forgot!" he exclaimed.

"What?" queried Jill, smiling kindly upon the boy.

Peg continued to thrum the fiddle.

"Did—did you find anything in my shirt, Peg?" faltered Ralph turning an appealing gaze upon the humpy figure across the way.

"Nary thing," and the fat boy burst into song—a rollicking Highland ditty in which Jill joined in a clear, half-developed contralto. Ralph sat back and listened, far from appreciating the song, however. He had lost something of more value even than life itself—precious papers, and the Cross of St. Glebe.

Peg tapped the floor with his toe, thrummed and sang with all the gusto of enthusiastic youth.

"Well, I vum!" he exclaimed at the end, turning upon his pale and trembling guest. "You look as though you had stabbed yourself with a corn knife, Ralph, old boy. Did our song frighten you?"

"No, no, not that," gaspingly articulated the half fainting Ralph. "I have lost papers, and—and the Cross of St. Glebe!"

"Well, hear him! The Cross of St. Glebe!"

"Yes," groaned the pale boy, "I have lost it; I am ruined!" and Ralph covered his face with his hands and began a low, heart-broken sobbing.

The girl regarded the crumpled, shaking figure with deep sympathy in her brown eyes. The remark about a cross puzzled her. She knew nothing of the former life of their unexpected guest, yet her heart went out to him in sympathy and friendliness.

"Don't feel so badly," she urged, going over to the boy, placing her arm about his thin, shaking shoulders. "I will be a sister to you, and Peg will be a brother. You shall stop with us till you are well and strong once more."

"Oh, well now," whimpered Ralph, straightening up, brushing aside the tears. "I am a silly fool to care; but then the cross—"

"Yes, the cross?" from gentle Jill.

"It—it was all I had to remember her by, you see."

"Yes, yes, of course," assented the girl.

"And I have almost found the secret, and with it the true story of my life. The cross was hers; she gave it to a woman nurse, who in turn left it with me."

"Well," broke in the impatient Peg, twanging the fiddle-strings, "what is it all about anyhow? Who is this 'her' you are talking about—sister, aunt, or mother?"

"My mother," faltered Ralph.

"Is she dead?"

"That I do not know. I think she is, though. The cross would tell the whole story, and now that is lost."

"We may be able to find it," suggested Jill.

"I am afraid not," sighed Ralph. "I must have lost it before I left Hardridge Camp, although only last night I placed it in an inside pocket of my shirt."

Jill sprang up and went into the next room. She brought the garments lately worn by our hero and placed them in his lap. She thought he might be able to find the cross still, but the pocket was empty, a pocket in which Ralph had kept a package of precious papers and the Cross of St. Glebe.

"What about the Cross of St. Glebe?" asked Peg. "It seems to me I have heard that name before; some ancient myth or something in connection with it; tell us about it, Ralph, boy."

Tugwell laid his fiddle carefully aside and turned his whole attention upon the boy he had so lately rescued from a watery grave.

"There isn't much to tell," assured our young hero, brushing aside a tear. "I have a faint memory of my mother, nothing at all of my father. A sad-faced woman has haunted me for years; I don't think she was ever happy. When she died, if she has passed from earth, she left a babe in the care of an old nurse, with instructions to give me every care, and to find a suitable home for me with a relative, an uncle I think. The nurse disappeared one day and the next I remember I was an inmate of the county house."

"Go on," urged Peg, whose bright round face was a picture of interest.

"There isn't much more."

"Oh, yes, there is more, much more," cried Fatty in an excess of interest. "I scent a mystery, and on such I dote. It's all like a story book. Tell us what this cross has to do with your life, with your mother?"

"I don't know much about that," returned Ralph, bracing up a bit. "The cross was mother's when she, a waif from the world, was an inmate of some Canadian convent school. I have heard something about it, some of mother's talk with a man who had a strong influence over her."

"This uncle, like enough?"

"Yes, I have thought that."

"Well, we must find the Cross of St. Glebe," and doughty Peg Tugwell sprang up and began a waltz about the room. "We'll go back to the camp and find the papers and the Cross. You'll go along, Ralph, and make claim to the goods when we find them?"

"I don't know," with an indrawing of the thin shoulders. "The man might murder me if I went back."

"What do you mean?"

"Gilbert Gragdon."

"Oh, that snipe! I'll go along with you and see that he keeps his distance. I know that man—"

A sharp rap on the door interrupted the speaker. Peg whirled as his sister answered the summons. Their guest uttered a startled cry when the bulky form of a man pushed across the threshold and confronted him.

CHAPTER III.

ANOTHER MISFORTUNE.

The caller was Gil Gragdon.

The very sight of the man brought back all his cruelty to the cringing boy. Weak in body, the lad's spirit was not strong.

"I am glad to find you, safe and sound," uttered the foreman as he stood with doffed hat looking into the eyes of his late chore-boy. "When Harks and I discovered the foot-bridge gone it gave us a scare. Ever since then I have been in a disturbed state. I want you to go back, Ralph."

"Not back to the camp?" uttered the astonished Overton.

"That's what, my lad. I didn't treat you fair. Here is something you forgot to take when you left so suddenly this morning."

The speaker held out a roll of bills—wages due the castoff chore-boy.

Ralph accepted the money with a swift flush of cheek and brow.

"Oh, thank you, sir!" he cried in excess of joy. "I need the money so much."

"I know you do, and besides, you are justly entitled to it. As I said, I was unduly harsh with you this morning, my conscience has pricked me ever since. Hope you won't lay up anything, my boy. My only excuse is that something went wrong in camp. I had a raging toothache besides, and—"

"That's apology enough, old chap," broke in Peg at this moment. "Ralph won't go back, however—you see he don't have to."

The man turned sharply on the speaker, his eyes flashing vexedly.

"Nobody asked you to speak," he growled.

"That's why I shot off my bazoo," chuckled the fat boy. "I am looking after Mr. Ralph Overton just at present. We don't ask any odds of you or the timber owner. Ralph has a better job than you can offer him."

Ralph regarded his boy friend in surprise. How dared he talk like this to so great a man as the boss of Hardridge Camp?

"We will leave that to Mr. Overton himself," coldly retorted Gragdon.

"All right. Ralph, tell the man you are out with him forever."

Our hero hesitated. He depended on work for his living, and, however, illy he might have been treated in the past, he felt he ought to go back, since it was no easy matter to secure work for a lad of his age.

"Your old place is open to you, my boy, at an increase of pay. What say you, will you go back with me?"

"Not with you, Mr. Gragdon," spoke Ralph, recovered somewhat from his astonishment. "These good friends will let me stop with them tonight, during which time I will think it over. If I decide to accept you offer I will come up to camp in the morning. Will that do?"

"It will not," with a shake of his red locks. "I have talked with Villaindon; he said get the boy back and treat him square; if he refuses to return, fill his place with that Russell boy from Barton way. You must decide tonight, at once. The Barton boy is ready and anxious for the place. We can't wait on boyish whims."

Ralph hesitated but an instant, declaring himself ready to accompany the foreman. He apologized to his young friends and started to his feet, with flushed face and quivered lip. This offer was so unexpected, so generous. Surely he had wronged the foreman by unjust indignation. Since the man had humbled himself to ask for his return our boy hero felt that it was his duty to accept.

Peg Tugwell came to the front with a bound; placing himself between the foreman and his guest.

"It's mighty queer," cried the fat boy, "that you have come to time so mighty sudden. What has happened to change your mind?"

"I'll have no words with you," snapped Gragdon. "Come along, Ralph; my buckboard waits outside."

Ralph hesitated. Peg spoke again, demanding of the man an explanation of his change of heart. For an instant the frown deepened on the brow of the surly foreman, then this was swept away by a sudden burst of laughter.

"You are the joke of Roaring Run, Peg," he said, affecting much merriment. "Of course, if you really want to know about this, I will say for your benefit that Mr. Villaindon was not pleased when he heard that I had discharged his chore-boy. The old gent seems to think a good deal of the least of his hired help, and very much of Ralph here in particular. I will say that it is at Mr. Villaindon's request that I am here."

"Good for the old man," cried Peg.

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"Yes, so I say. Well, Ralph, have you decided?"

The boy addressed, turned an appealing look at Peg.

"Do as you like, Ralph," said Peg.

"I'd like to please you, Peg, for you saved my life."

"Saved your life!" ejaculated Gragdon, a queer look shooting into his piggish eyes.

"Yes; I went down with the bridge," explained the chore-boy, "and would have been drowned if this boy hadn't have saved me at much risk to himself."

"Be careful," warned the fat boy, laughing. "Don't lay it on too thick."

"So!" ejaculated the foreman.

No doubt he had wondered how the chore-boy had escaped death from the ugly maw of the rapids. He could have explained how the bridge became so unstable as to go down beneath the weight of one slender boy, had he been so minded, but he did nothing of the kind. Peg Tugwell was a meddlesome youth whom he (Gragdon) would have delighted to smother.

"I will see you again soon," agreed Ralph as he accompanied the foreman outside. "Come up to the shanties in a day or two anyhow, Peg. I don't want to lose your friendship."

"Oh, I'll be around soon, never fear," assured the fat boy.

Peg and his sister sat for some time in silent meditation after the chore-boy and foreman had taken their departure.

"I don't like the looks of things a little bit," said the boy, with a shake of his round head. "That Gil Gragdon is a scoundrel."

"Yes," agreed his sister, "Gragdon is a great rogue."

"I have no doubt he has some reason for taking Ralph back which he didn't tell us about. I kind of like that fellow, don't you, Jull?"

"How can you ask me when I just told you I thought him a great rogue?"

"I mean Ralph Overton of course. Don't try to be funny, Jill," returned the fat boy impatiently. "From what Ralph said about that cross and valuable papers I reckon there's a mystery connected with the little fellow that's worth unraveling. I'm going to keep an eye out for him and his doings right along now."

"I hope you will, Peg."

Meantime the foreman and his charge were riding slowly toward the highlands on which were located the camps of the Villaindon lumber and timber company.

They rode for some time in silence.

"You have some papers," suddenly questioned the boy's companion.

"Papers? You mean—"

"I mean papers regarding property. Some one told me about it and I should like to have you tell me about them—also about that cross."

Ralph uttered an astonished cry.

"Surprised are you?" and the man laughed.

"How did you know?" began the boy, only to be interrupted by his companion, who said: "I have a way of finding out a good many things. One is that you came back to the camp after you were discharged this morning and got the cross and those papers. Have you them with you now?"

The change in the voice of the foreman was very noticeable. His wheedling, apologetic manner fell from him like a mantle. In the darkness of the night a weird loneliness oppressed every living thing. Ralph felt the incubus even before the change in the manner of his companion.

"Give me the cross, boy."

The speaker's voice rang out sharply; at the same time Gragdon laid a hand on the arm of his boy companion, drawing down the horse to a full stop.

They were in the dense woods, on one side the roaring, foaming waters of Roaring Run, on the other a dense cedar thicket. The spot was dark as a pocket, full of buzzing insects and drumming sounds peculiar to the summer night.

For the first time since taking his seat in the vehicle Ralph felt a thrill of genuine alarm.

"I have no cross," he said in quick reply.

"Then give me the papers."

"Nor have I any papers; they would not be yours even if I had," said Ralph, half-defiantly. He was losing patience with the queer acting of Foreman Gragdon.

"We'll see about that," snarled the foreman.

With one hand he held his victim while with the other he proceeded to search his pockets. Ralph, now thoroughly indignant, struggled to get away. This had the effect to anger Gragdon, who thrust Ralph by no means gently into the bottom of the vehicle, pressing a heavy knee upon his breast.

"I'll learn you to be impudent!" snarled the burly scamp, while he searched our young hero's pockets. There were no results, much to the disappointment of the searcher.

"Where have you hidden them?" demanded the enraged man, shaking his victim angrily. "I'll kill you if you don't tell me!"

"I can't tell you, sir," protested the boy. "Don't murder me, Mr. Gragdon—"

"Shut up, you young thief."

The horse pawed the earth, impatient to be moving. Gragdon guided the animal aside, sprang out, dragging his boy passenger along.

"I'll not bother any longer with you, Ralph Overton," said his captor in gruff tones. "You are better out of the world than in it. You was a little fool to think I wanted you back at the camp."

Thus muttering, the man began dragging Ralph toward the brink of the Run, from the depths of which there came a sullen, angry roar. Despite his struggles our young hero found himself powerless in the hands of this ferocious man. He felt the hand of Gragdon tear the money he had paid him from his pocket and realized that he had been deceived.

At this moment the foreman's horse uttered a frightened snort, reared backward, turned about and tore down the road at whirlwind speed.

"Curse the luck!"

But the fellow did not turn aside from his purpose. He approached the brink of the Run, lifted Ralph high in the air, intending to hurl the frightened lad into the whirling waters below.

A crackling of brush behind him startled the villian from his purpose.

This diversion was sufficient to change the whole aspect of the case. When the arms of Gragdon lowered his victim the latter clutched the throat of his murderous enemy.

"Ah—ah!" sputtered and gasped the baffled man. He tore lustily at the small white hands, gasped for breath, staggered backward and sank weakly to the ground. Now was Ralph Overton's opportunity, which he did not fail to improve.

In falling the big brute of a man thumped his temple against a stone. His senses left him; the boy stood up, quivering, yet free!

Ralph stood, half-stunned, revolving rapidly in his mind what he ought to do. Filled with terrible indignation against his enemy, the lad obeyed the first impulse of an overwrought nature, dragged the foreman to the brink of the hill and pushed him over.

On the instant, as the crash and thud of the rolling body came up to ears from below, poor Ralph realized what he had done.

The lad stood petrified, with an awful feeling of guilt.

A distant splash announced that the man, helpless from the blow on the temple, had gone to his death.

"And I killed him!" gasped weak and shaking Ralph Overton.

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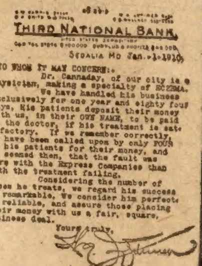

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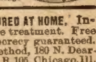

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the arm of the boy and drew him away from the awful brink of the whirlpool.

"Where is Gil Gragdon, boy?" demanded a voice that sent an awful chill to the heart of the frightened chore-boy.

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* * *

The Sea Trailer.

(Continued from page eight.)

ing ships, but what about an auger? That we can't get—You are not listening."

"What in blazes is that humped-up thing over younder? Betwixt the bushes and the sand-bank. I can't make sure from here, but it looks like a wrecked vessel half buried in sand."

Barron wheeled, looked and grew excited. is eyes gleamed with keen interest.

"You are right!" he declared. "An abandoned, dismasted, forlorn wreck, but something must be inside. Perhaps carpenter tools will be there, to use on our raft. Come!"

They hastened to the point where lay the discovery.

The wreck had driven ashore near the point of a side ridge, the tapering end of which rose just high enough to hide the hulk except when one had a favorable spot from which to look. It had come aground with its larboard quarter foremost, and as the later gales had been gradually burying it in sand that quarter was the only part fairly clear of the yellow obstruction. Next to the water the sand rose in a bank half as high as the bulwark rail, so the doomed craft bade fair to be wholly covered eventually, unless freed by a tempest from another direction.

"That hooker saw hard times before she went aground," said Eli, soberly looking as they walked. "All masts gone, and the larboard bulwark stove in at the waist."

Barron made no answer, but he was absorbing as much information as his comrade. Forlorn as the wreck was, his mind was on the possibilities of her interior. Unless she had been stripped of her fittings and other things by natives, she would prove a storehouse from which they could draw freely and richly.

Reaching the hulk they mounted to the deck.

"She has been on fire," pursued Eli. "Deck and mast-stumps are all blackened and, in places, charred."

"What we want is to know what's below."

Very little sand littered the deck, and only in spots, while the companionway stood clear. They hurried down and were in the cabin. Total darkness was there, but they searched for means of having a light, came upon a lantern and returned to the deck. The only known way of accomplishing their purpose was by means of their gunpowder, and they worked this device so well that they caught the flame and had the lantern aglow.

"Mighty little sand has got below," remarked Eli. "This lantern is decently clean. Still, I suppose the wreck has been here only four or five years—"

He became silent as they re-entered the cabin. It was a plain and economically built vessel in all parts, no fancy woods entering into the cabin bulkheads, and there was not much to invite admiration. The furnishings, too, were meager, but the table, a couple of chairs and a few minor articles remained.

Here, as on deck, signs of fire remained, but the blaze had not been serious.

They moved on, entering the cabins, but when Eli's curiosity led him to search for the log-book and the rest of the ship's papers, he found nothing.

A visit to the hold showed the craft to have been in ballast, and general results would have been disappointing but for the discovery of plenty of tools of just the kind needed in their contemplated operations. When this matter was settled they became heedful of certain points that had vaguely attracted their attention while searching.

"Somebody has been here since she drove ashore," said Barron. "Much is missing—too much for us to ascribe it to the men who, perhaps, deserted her when she was wrecked. Seems odd, too! If natives sacked her, why did they stop short with so much left in her?"

"Maybe some other vessel has touched here and taken what was wanted," suggested Eli.

"Possibly. Anyhow, all is here that we require. Axes, saws, augers and other tools in abundance—an odd supply of some of them. There was some litter on deck. Let's go there and see if anything will serve our purpose."

They passed up the companionway. Eli was ahead, and as he reached the stump of the main-mast, he stopped short, his eyes bent upon the deck.

"Say!" he exclaimed, "somebody has been here lately. See!" and he pointed.

"Footprints in the sand!"

"Ay, fresh ones, and not ours. Neither are they native feet that did it. Looks as if made by a white man who had footgear of his own construction. Regular pads."

"Fresh tracks as you say. By my life! there is somebody else on this island!"

"Seems like it, but—say, if anybody is here, why hasn't he come forward to greet us? A shipwrecked man would naturally hail human company."

Barron gazed keenly across the visible part of the island.

"Such a man might have various reasons for hiding. Possibly he is in fear of us, or maybe he is hostile and bides his time to strike us a deadly blow. We must have a wary eye open for that fellow. Certain foreigners are dangerous to peaceful men like us."

"The stern of the ship is not buried deeply, and maybe her name will give a hint of her nationality."

"Yes, unless she has changed hands since being named."

They dropped to the sand and moved toward the stern. As had been hoped it was free from the accumulation, and presently the name was clearly before them. Eli spelled it out slowly, but already Barron who was staring with wide-open, strangely-lighted eyes, his face gone gray and astir with powerful emotions.

"Ursa Major!" spoke Eli.

He said more, commenting freely, but Barron did not hear. He had been deeply moved when he found himself on the treasure island, but the latest discovery dwarfed the first.

When Benito gave the history of the book with Clayton Barron's map of Torrento Island and the outlying waters, he had said that he secured it from a brigantine named Ursa Major. Now, Clayton Barron's son stood by the wreck of that brigantine.

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* * *

Ben Sheldon's Love

(Continued from page thirteen.)

The scout of the red men again spoke: "Wind-that-Blows and his men have gone to slaughter the whites who befriended the Fawn. If she is in their camp she will share their fate, or again be taken captive."

Night-Hawk rose to his feet, excited, and anxious to act.

"Then we will go back the way we came," he said, "we cannot wait for their return to their wigwams. It will be too late, Nekoosa will be scalped, and her locks hanging from the belt of some dog of Wind-that-Blows!"

"They have gone around the mountain at its base," volunteered one who had not spoken before. "It is a long way around; if we go back over the trail we followed here we will be there before them. The whites who have nourished the Fawn in their bosom shall be spared. Does the great chief say thus?"

"It is well," answered Night-Hawk. "Later we will go back to the village and take the women and children and burn the tepees; and the place shall know them no more. Wind-that-Blows shall cease to blow his evil breath upon red men or white. The chief has spoken!"

The scores and scores of dark forms rose from their sitting posture, and with habitual silence headed back toward the hollow in the mountain where the emigrants were waiting in tortured suspense and agonized terror the sounding of the war-whoop that meant their doom.

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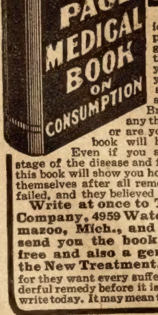
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Dazzling Schemes.

(Continued from page five.)

and the Countess of Zara," he said, ignoring the other's words.

"Just so," nodded the stranger. "I regret to say that it will be impossible for either of the ladies to see you at present. If you have any message, I might deliver it to them."

Sandy did not reply immediately. The fellow was up to some game. Just what it was, remained to be seen. It was Sandy's desire to find out. He felt a strong impulse to seize the fellow and choke him into a confession, but he realized that the situation demanded that he do nothing rashly. The man might have a score of accomplices waiting within call, and he saw the necessity of employing diplomatic measures before resorting to open hostility.

"I have no message to send to the ladies excepting to inform them that I am here awaiting their pleasure," he said.

"I am afraid the gentleman is making a mistake if he supposes that the Countess and Miss Dangerfield will care to see one who enters the house by breaking in at the rear entrance," the man remarked with a shrug of his shoulders.

"That is probably the way you came in," remarked Sandy. "I could hardly imagine a blackguard like you entering a respectable house by the front door."

Sandy spoke on the impulse, thereby violating his intention to keep his temper.

The face of the stranger flushed with sudden anger. He made a motion as if to put his hand to his pocket, but dropped it at his side and smiled.

"I almost forgot that I was talking with an American," he said with a contemptuous shrug of his shoulders, "a people the most of whom you meet abroad are either those who are rich from plundering the poor of their country or fugitives from the hand of the law!"

"I am not going to say what class of my countrymen you have associated with," replied Sandy, placidly. "All this is aside from the question. Who are you? and what business have you here?"

The stranger smiled.

"I might say that it is no affair of yours," he said, "but then I have no objection to answering your question. I am Ruric Damonoff, a relative of the Countess of Zara, if it will be any consolation for you to know."

This story, developing very thrilling happenings, will be continued in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year; it is worth many times that amount. Send in your subscription, for many great stories that you cannot afford to miss will appear during the coming months.

* * *

In Japan's Shops.

The shops and booths of Japan are of unfailing interest, a writer in the Christian Herald remarks. Here the green grocer and fruit seller has arranged his wares till it seems as though one looked upon a great bouquet. There the flower shop blazes in brilliance and the lantern maker squats at his multicolored task. At the next entrance we perhaps see a man severing chicken meat from the bone and he performs the operation as skillfully as the surgeon with his dissecting knife. Beef and chicken are commonly sold in this fashion. But curious things are not found in the shops alone. The green vegetable peddler at once arouses attention. He carries loads heavy enough for a horse, but with quick step he will walk from street to street, still with enough energy to call his wares as he goes. One marvels at those wonderful big, snow white radishes he sells; green onions, carrots, fruits, and even lotus roots dug from the muddy bottoms of ponds. Fancy yourself eating long burdock roots which grow in any country back yard! The Japanese consider these a toothsome article and the peddler fetches them from the the farmers, who raises them like turnips.

* * *

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Winks—Why, sure! I know a barber who has three little shavers.

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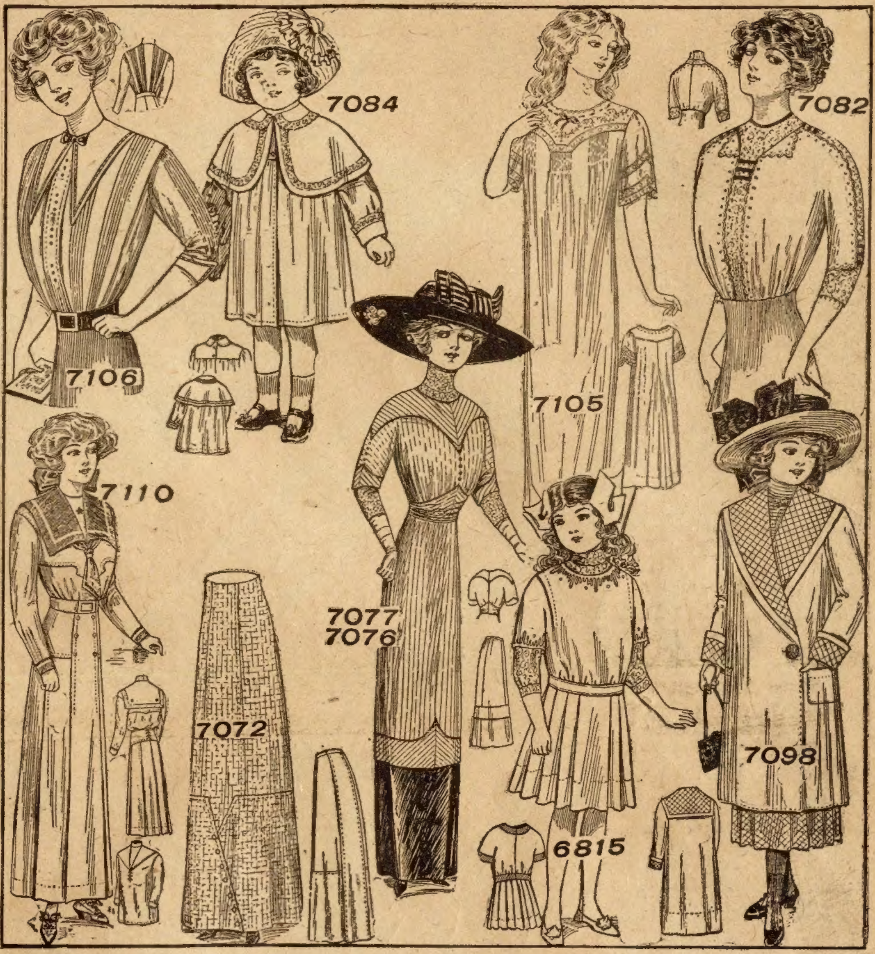

7106—Tucked Blouse, 34 to 42 bust. For the medium size will be required 3⅝ yards of material 27, 3 yards 36 or 2¼ yards 44 inches wide, with 3¼ yards of banding.

7084—Child's Coat with Cape, 2, 4 and 6 years. For a child of 4 years of age will be required 3¾ yards of material 27, 2½ yards 36 or 2⅝ yards 44 inches wide with 3½ yards of banding to trim as shown in the large view.

7105—Fancy Yoke Night-Gown, Small 34 or 36, Medium 38 or 40, Large 42 or 44 bust. For the medium size will be required 3⅞ yards of material 36 inches wide, 3¼ yards 44, 4 yards of insertion, 3 yards of edging.

7082—Fancy Blouse, 34 to 42 bust. For the medium size will be required 2½ yards of material 27, 1½ yards 36 or 1¼ yards 44 inches wide, with 1 yard of all-over lace 18 and ⅞ yard of lace 6 inches wide, 1½ yards of velvet ribbon to trim as illustrated.

7110—Sailor Suit for Misses and Small Women, 14, 16 and 18 years. For the 16 year size will be required 9¼ yards of material 27 inches wide, 7⅝ yards 36 or 5¼ yards 44, with ⅝ yard 27 inches wide for collar and cuffs. The width of the skirt at the lower edge is 3 yards, 2 yards when plaited.

7072—Six Gored Skirt, 22 to 32 waist. For the medium size will be required 6½ yards of material 27, 4¾ yards 36 or 44 inches wide, for the skirt with the band; 5 yards 27, 3¾ yards 36 or 44 inches wide for the skirt without the band. The width of the skirt at the lower edge is 2¼ yards.

7077—One-Piece Blouse, 34 to 42 bust. 7076—Three-Piece Skirt, 22 to 32 waist. For the medium size will be required for the blouse as illustrated 3½ yards of material 27, 2 yards 36 or 44 inches wide, with ⅞ yard of all-over lace; for the skirt will be needed 3¼ yards of material 27, 2¼ yards 36 or 44 inches wide, with 2 yards of satin 27 inches wide.

6815—Girl's Dress, 6, 8 and 10 years. For the 8 year size the dress will require 4½ yards material 27 inches, 3 yards 36, or 2⅝ yards 44 inches wide. It can be worn over any guimpe.

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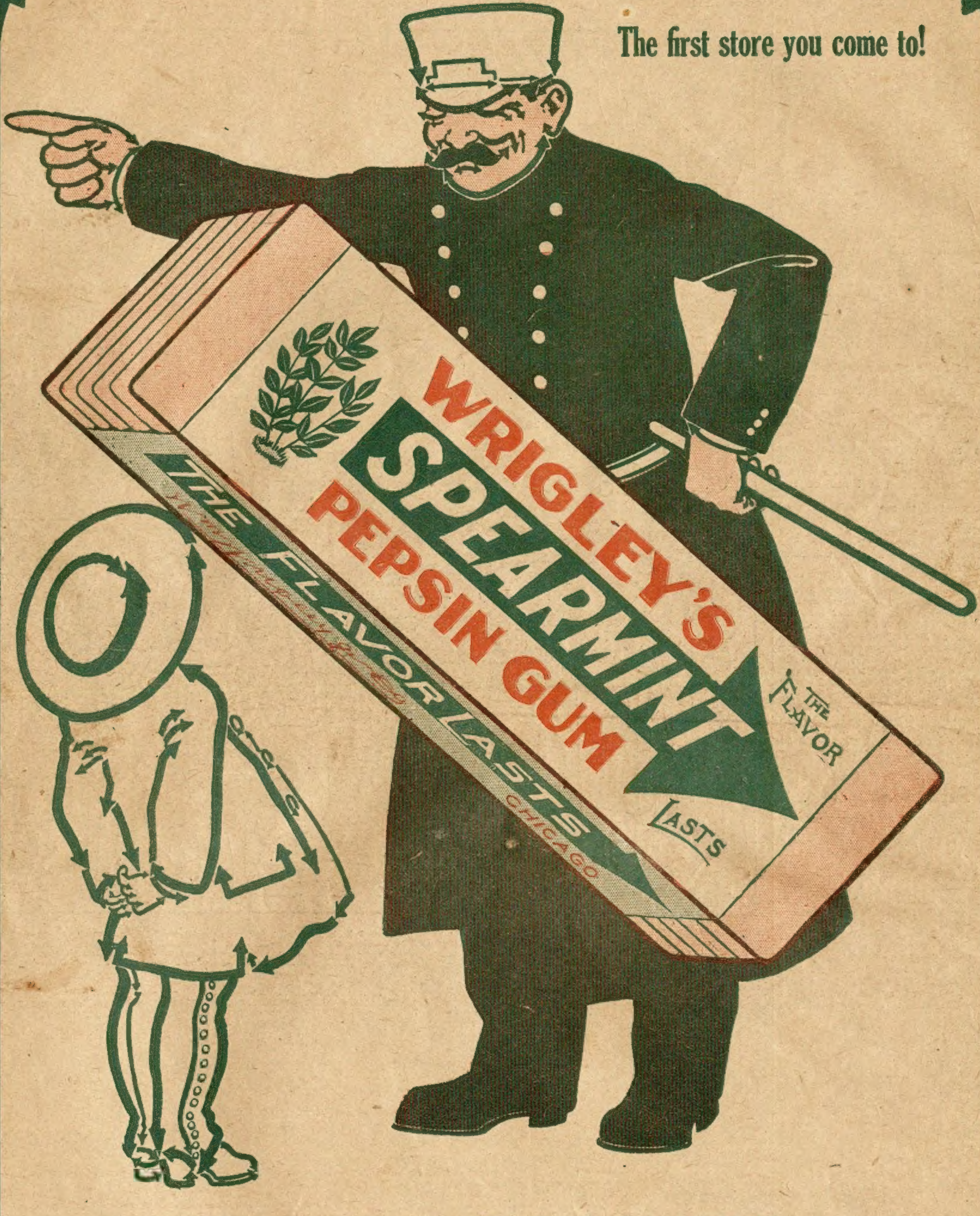
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